

BRISTOL RECORD SOCIETY'S  
PUBLICATIONS  
VOL. XXXVI

THE  
PORT OF BRISTOL  
1848-1884



THE  
PORT OF BRISTOL  
1848-1884

EDITED BY  
DAVID LARGE

*Printed for the*  
BRISTOL RECORD SOCIETY  
1984

ISBN 0 901583 05 1

ISSN 0305 8730

© David Large

Produced for the Society by  
Alan Sutton Publishing Limited, Gloucester  
Printed in Great Britain  
by Redwood Burn Limited, Trowbridge



## CONTENTS

	Page
Acknowledgements	iv
Introduction	vii
Note on the records	xxix
Appendix: the finances of the port 1848–1883	xxxix
Editorial method	xli
Docks Committee Minutes 1848–1884	1
Index	208

**The Editor and the Society acknowledge with gratitude a generous grant from the Publications Committee of the University of Bristol to assist with the cost of publication of this volume.**

## INTRODUCTION

Bristol was unique among the larger ports of the United Kingdom in the nineteenth century in being operated in the first half of the century by a private company and then from 1848 by a municipal corporation. The dramatic change to municipal ownership was brought about after much agitation<sup>1</sup> from the Free Port Association by the Bristol Dock Transfer Act (11 and 12 Vic., c.43) which transferred to the mayor, aldermen and burgesses all the assets and liabilities of the private Bristol Dock Company. What were these? The chief asset was, of course, the Floating Harbour<sup>2</sup> created by the Dock Company between 1804–1809. For the time this was a major and impressive engineering feat which in essence had produced a large non tidal basin in the heart of the city at the confluence of the rivers Avon and Frome. The modern history of Bristol's port may be said to have begun when ships in harbour floated upright at all states of the tide instead of heeling over and lying on the mud banks of the two rivers at low tide as had been so for centuries past. However, as the Dock Company discovered, the Floating Harbour had its drawbacks. These were threefold: it had cost the Company £590,014 in all, far more than it had anticipated;<sup>3</sup> it was expensive to maintain; and access to it was a continuing problem. Much of the history of the port in the first half of the nineteenth century was dominated by wrestling with these drawbacks with but limited success.

The burden of interest payment on the heavy debt incurred by the Company in constructing the Floating Harbour obliged it both to charge shipping using it high dues and to restrict dividends to its shareholders. In 1848 Bristol had the unenviable reputation of being the most expensive port in Britain. It was universally considered that only a sharp reduction in dues would enable the port to flourish. As for the Company's shareholders they received no dividends from

<sup>1</sup> For the agitation leading to the Transfer Act see G.W.A. Bush, *Bristol and its municipal government* (BRS XXIX 1976) pp 165–172.

<sup>2</sup> For its main features see *Docks Committee Minute Book*, 25 Feb. 1850 (hereafter cited as *Minutes*).

<sup>3</sup> See R.A. Buchanan, The construction of the Floating Harbour in Bristol: 1804–1809 in *Trans. Bristol and Glouc. Arch. Soc.* vol. 88 (1969) pp 184–204.

1809-1823 and again from 1844-1848 and for the whole period of the Company's existence down to municipalization the average dividend was only 1½ per cent.

Maintenance of the Floating Harbour proved costly because it was apt to silt up. There were two reasons for this: first, an insufficient water supply had been provided and secondly, the river Frome, which with the Feeder Canal from the Avon, provided the water supply, deposited mud as well as water in the Float. The latter problem was alleviated by 1828 by redirecting the foul waters of the Frome. But although the Company adopted devices suggested by Brunel for further improving the situation it did not keep abreast of the task of removing the silt since in 1854 the councils' Docks Committee observed that over the past few years it had removed 'an immense mass of many thousands of tons of mud and rubbish' so that the Floating Harbour was 'generally in a far better state as regards depths of water . . . than it had been for many years in the past.'<sup>4</sup>

Access to the Floating Harbour meant getting a ship from the deep water anchorage of King Road just off the Somerset shore of the Severn Estuary up the seven miles of the river Avon and then passing the ship, necessarily through a lock, into the Float itself. In the first half of the nineteenth century before later improvement the Avon was conspicuous for its narrowness, sharp bends and projecting points not to mention its unusually large and rapid rise and fall of tide which meant that sizeable ships needed towing up and down if they were not to become stranded. Entering or leaving the Float involved a sharp turn in the river to enter or leave the lock. The Dock Company was unfortunate in that after it had built the Floating Harbour the steam driven iron paddle ship began to make its appearance. Unlike wooden sailing ships whose maximum possible length was about 300 ft. iron ships could be made longer and their paddles gave them a width which made passing them through existing locks difficult or impossible. Already, before municipalization, the Dock Company had been compelled to commission Brunel to create a new and larger entrance lock.<sup>5</sup> But before this was opened in 1849 the unsuitability of Bristol as a base for the new breed of steam driven transatlantic passenger ships had been demonstrated, ironically enough by Bristolians themselves, when the Great Western Steamship Company's celebrated S.S. *Great Britain* had shown the inadequacies of the port by taking six months of heaving and straining to get her out of her dock into the Float and out of the Float and down to the Severn for her trials.<sup>6</sup>

To compound the financial, engineering and natural problems faced by the Dock Company the economic context in which it had to operate was not particularly cheerful. As the Docks Committee's

<sup>4</sup> R.A. Buchanan, Brunel in Bristol, in P. McGrath and J. Cannon, *Essays in Bristol and Gloucestershire History*, pp 229-230; *Minutes* 31 July 1854.

<sup>5</sup> For this see R.A. Buchanan, Brunel in Bristol, *op. cit.* pp 230-2.

<sup>6</sup> For useful detail G. Farr, *The Steamship Great Britain*, (Bristol 1965).



Secretary Francis Girdlestone was to say in 1882 'it is quite a mistake to think that Docks make trade. They assist but do not create trade.'<sup>7</sup> The basic trouble in the first half of the century was that Bristol unlike booming Liverpool or the emergent ports of S. Wales did not enjoy a substantial expanding industrial hinterland generating imports and exports on a large scale. Also her transport links with the Midlands industrial districts were less satisfactory than those of Liverpool.<sup>8</sup> The industrial revolution to a large extent passed Bristol by and she did not share in the population explosion experienced by most British cities.<sup>9</sup> Her trade continued along traditional lines with the importing of tobacco, wines and spirits, sugar, cocoa and coffee, palm oil and Mediterranean fruit: cotton, coal and iron played a negligible role. It was scarcely surprising that her port was far from flourishing in the first decade of Queen Victoria's reign. The transfer of the Dock Company to the city council it was fervently hoped in Bristol would change all this.<sup>10</sup> This volume is devoted to providing evidence as to whether these hopes were realized or not.

The recipe for recovery envisaged by the Transfer Act was to bring about a reduction of dues by empowering the city council to impose a maximum of a 4d. rate to generate increased income for the Dock Estate and to borrow up to £70,000 to put the Floating Harbour in good repair. The sinking fund by which the Dock Company had paid off £77,000 of its original debt of £590,014 was to be wound up as a further saving on current expenditure but the shareholders of the Company and holders of its promissory notes were to go on being paid interest.<sup>11</sup>

The city council, no doubt drawing on previous experience, notably with policing the city, sought to guide port development by appointing a committee consisting of its own members. Basically this meant that throughout these thirty six years a group of leading Bristol business and professional men managed the port. 73 councillors and aldermen served on the Committee between 1848 and 1883.<sup>12</sup> Of the

<sup>7</sup> *Bristol Record Office* (hereafter BRO) *Statistical Books* vol. 2 ff 184–197 F.B. Girdlestone to Messrs Prichard and Gibson 23 Feb. 1882.

<sup>8</sup> For instance the notorious hindrance of the break in the gauge of the railways at Gloucester was not remedied until 1854.

<sup>9</sup> See B.W.E. Alford's discussion of Bristol's population history in his, *The economic development of Bristol in the nineteenth century: an enigma?* in P. McGrath and J. Cannon, *Essays in Bristol and Gloucestershire History*, pp 254–9.

<sup>10</sup> For the rejoicings in Bristol on the day the reduced charges ordered by the new Docks Committee first came into operation see *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal* 4, 18 Nov. 1848 and in the national press see e.g. *Illustrated London News* 18 Nov. 1848. For some of the extravagant hopes for the future see *Dock Question: the warning voice answered* (Bristol, 1847), p. 4; *Dock Question: objections to the transfer by "owner and occupier" answered* (Bristol, 1847), p. 2 and *Bristol Free Port Tract*, no. 14 pp 2–3.

<sup>11</sup> There were 2,209 shares at £147 9s 0d. These were to earn £2 12s 6d % and there were £268,324 worth of 5% promissory notes for which 5% City notes were to be substituted.

<sup>12</sup> Particulars of the 73 members are to be found in W.G. Neale's *At the port of Bristol* (Bristol, 1968).

73 the two largest categories were thirteen manufacturers chiefly active in producing consumer goods such as soap or beer and sixteen wholesalers chiefly concerned with supplying the home market. Of the rest, eight were involved in shipping either as owners or brokers; seven were concerned with Bristol's historic West India trade; five were major warehouse owners; four were American or African merchants; four were timber importers; four were lawyers; three were grain merchants; three were bankers; two were well to do surgeons; there was one stockbroker, one auctioneer and one member who ran a road haulage business. In short, they represented a considerable range of business interests no one interest predominating. Only two members seem to have been rentiers, the rest being active in business. All were well off as their addresses indicate and some were very well off since they ran the largest businesses of their kind in the city. Their standing in Bristol's business life may be judged by the fact that seventeen of the seventy three served as Masters of the Merchant Venturers and nine as Presidents of the Chamber of Commerce.

Since the city council throughout these years had a Conservative majority it is hardly surprising that forty three of the seventy three who served on the Docks Committee were Conservatives as opposed to thirty who were Liberals. Conservative control of the council meant Conservative control of elections to the aldermanic bench. A quarter (twelve) of the forty three Conservative members of the Committee had not submitted themselves to the municipal electorate but became members as aldermen. There included such prominent members of the committee as William Proctor Baker, chairman 1880-2, James Ford, deputy chairman, 1873-77 and Richard Robinson, deputy chairman 1852-9. For all except the two years and four months during which George Wills, a Liberal, served in this capacity, Conservatives chaired the Committee and the deputy Chairman was a Conservative except for the first four years when the prominent Quaker and Liberal, George Thomas, occupied the position.

Party politics, however, played little part in the controversies over port management. Divisions both in the committee and city council cut across party lines. Force of personality and business acumen and interests determined who should play the leading role. The key issue which surfaced in 1858 and provoked a miniature civil war splitting the Docks Committee, the city council, the Chamber of Commerce and the Merchant Venturers into warring factions,<sup>13</sup> was quite simply

<sup>13</sup> Ranged against each other were 'the fixed property party' many of whom owned substantial property adjacent to the Floating Harbour and were residents of Clifton, and the supporters of the rivermouth docks. The 'fixed property party' were determined that no additional rate should be levied on their property for rivermouth dock construction. The supporters of rivermouth docks were divided into those backing Avonmouth dock, to be built on land owned by the Miles family of Kingweston House, and those backing Portishead adjacent to the estate of the Smyths of Ashton Court.

should the Docks Committee 'consider providing Dock accommodation at the mouth of the river'.<sup>14</sup> Eventually the city council and the Docks Committee decided by majority votes *not* to do so.<sup>15</sup> By 1861 the Committee had formulated an alternative policy of 'Home Improvements'. It had four objectives: keeping the Floating Harbour in perfect repair and improving the facilities; reducing dues on shipping using the port; rationalizing the rate structure so that the rates falling on city property for the aid of the port could be abolished; and, finally, improving the seven mile river approach. Financing was to come from the increasing surplus of revenue over expenditure which was emerging by the early sixties.<sup>16</sup> As the Committees' minutes show this policy was pursued steadily for twenty years from 1861 onwards.<sup>17</sup>

What was the upshot? Certainly the Floating Harbour was in a far better state of repair by the early eighties than it was in 1848 and its facilities were substantially improved. New entrance and junction locks 350 ft. long and 62 ft. wide had been installed. A harbour railway wharf of about 886 yards long with a depth alongside of 22 ft. had been built as well as the smaller deep water Bathurst wharf and Mardyke wharf of nearly 600 ft. long for shallower draught vessels. On the south side of the Floating Harbour sheds providing 90,339 sq. ft. of enclosed space and 41,645 sq. ft. of open space had been erected and on the City Quays sheds had been built to provide 58,513 sq. ft. of enclosed and 31,982 of open space. Covered space amounting to 42,000 sq. ft. for the reception of 'foreign animals' had been constructed at Cumberland road and basin and a new hydraulically operated swing bridge installed at Princes Street. Much also had been done in these twenty years to straighten the banks and bed of the

<sup>14</sup> *Minutes* 15 Feb. 1858. Two considerations appeared to have brought the issue to a head, first the directors of Brunel's *Leviathan* project were casting about for a suitable home port for this incredible giant and, secondly, Bristolians thought they had an advantage over rival ports in having easy access across the Severn to the large quantities of Welsh steam coal required to feed *Leviathan*. For a typical statement of the second consideration see *Bristol Times and Journal* 10 July 1858.

<sup>15</sup> The crucial votes occurred in the city council. The first on 7 Oct. 1858, when the fixed property party defeated a proposal to appoint a special committee of the council to confer with the Merchant Venturers and the Chamber of Commerce about providing a rivermouth dock. The margin was one vote. 8 of the 14 members of the Docks Committee voted with the fixed property party, three against and three were absent. In 1860 the rivermouth dock party did succeed in having a council committee appointed to consider a rivermouth scheme 'without further taxation'. The 'fixed property party' hit back after the municipal elections in November 1860 favoured their cause and in December 1860 decisively defeated an amendment favouring a rivermouth dock by 31 votes to 24.

<sup>16</sup> The *Minutes* show revenue increasing from an average of £33,356 p.a. between 1850 and 1856 to an average of £43,155 between 1857 and 1860.

<sup>17</sup> An excellent summary of the 'Home Improvements' was provided by Girdlestone to the Board of Trade for printing in *Returns relating to Harbours giving a description of works executed within the last twenty years* (*Parliamentary Papers* 1883 H.C.313 LXII pp 166–170. *BRO Statistical Books* vol. 3 ff 263–286 for a manuscript version which shows that the information was requested by the Board of Trade.

river Avon by dredging and quarrying. The aim had been to give the bed of the river a uniform fall to its mouth of 1 in 2,200 starting at a depth of about 2 ft. below the outer sill of the entrance lock where the depth was 33 ft. at spring tides and 23 ft. at neap tides. This work, however, was not quite completed by 1883.

As far as port charges were concerned, the Docks Committee's Secretary F.B. Girdlestone claimed in 1882 that thanks to the reduction of dues in 1848, 1851, 1863 and 1877, Bristol had become 'one of the cheapest [ports] in Britain'. His claim was backed up by tables in the statistical volumes compiled in his office from 1874 onwards in which comparison of dues charged at Liverpool and London showed Bristol to charge less. Girdlestone, however, was not satisfied. He believed that Bristol's charges might have been further reduced, and the 4d rate abolished, but for the financing out of ordinary revenue of items of capital expenditure. The extent to which this has been done between 1848 and 31 Dec. 1882 he estimated to amount to about a quarter of a million pounds. If this sum had been borrowed, as the rest of the capital expenditure had been, then the objective of even lower dues and abolition of the rate in aid would have been achieved.<sup>18</sup> As it was the rates in fact made an increasing contribution to the Dock Committee's income, as the rateable value of the city increased from £437,726 in 1851 to £834,541 in 1878.<sup>19</sup>

But what of the shipping using the port and the goods carried by that shipping? It was to a substantial increase in this that the advocates of transferring management of the docks to the city council looked. Were their hopes realized? Some extended examination is necessary since the Docks Committee Minutes are not too helpful on this vital matter.

As the table below shows the total tonnage entering Bristol, particularly from 1857 onwards, showed a considerable upward trend. Between 1848 and 1883 there was an increase from just over half a million tons to nearly a million and a quarter.

As far as Bristol's ranking among the U.K. ports for which returns are available is concerned, it should be noted that the fall in her rank order from 1873 onwards was partly due to a change in the official statistics. Before 1873 total entry tonnage did not include coastal shipping entering a port *in ballast*. When this was included ports such as Swansea, Newport and Sunderland and even Beaumaris and Cowes to which many empty coasters resorted to pick up cargoes or passengers went up the rank order at Bristol's expense since few ships entered Bristol in ballast. This was a symptom of the port's relative

<sup>18</sup> *BRO Statistical Books* vol. 2. ff 184-197 F.B. Girdlestone to Messrs Prichard and Gibson 23 Feb. 1882 which sets out his argument in detail; *ibid* ff 141-2 for his list of 41 items 'paid out of Dock Revenue 1848-1881 but properly chargeable to Capital Account'. These added up to £256,366. He believed 'the only reason, I imagine, why this was done has been because of the great difficulty which exists in a Municipal Corporation promoting any Bill in Parliament'.

<sup>19</sup> *BRO Statistical Books* vol 1. f 87 for the figures.



TABLE I

*Total number of vessels, sail and steam, and their tonnage entering Bristol with cargoes or in ballast from foreign countries, British possessions and coastwise, 1848-1883, including their repeated voyages<sup>1</sup>*

Year	Vessels	Tonnage <sup>2</sup> (in '000)	Rank Order	Year	Vessels	Tonnage (in '000)	Rank Order
1848	7,215	544	—	1866	7,916	780	8
1849	7,260	559	—	1867	7,885	798	9
1850	7,177	553	—	1868	7,987	805	9
1851	6,758	529	—	1869	8,031	853	9
1852	6,389	512	—	1870	8,706	912	9
1853	5,680	526	8	1871	9,499	991	8
1854	5,631	557	8	1872	9,107	1,027	9
1855	5,771	531	8	1873	9,353	1,059	12 (10)
1856	5,811	546	8	1874	10,024	1,081	12 (9)
1857	5,684	557	9	1875	9,986	1,066	12 (11)
1858	6,599	621	8	1876	9,422	1,108	12 (10)
1859	7,435	693	8	1877	8,783	1,066	14 (11)
1860	7,747	710	9	1878	8,997	1,089	14 (11)
1861	7,618	753	8	1879	9,269	1,139	13 (10)
1862	9,230	849	7	1880	9,745	1,229	15 (10)
1863	7,449	738	8	1881	9,216	1,135	15 (11)
1865	7,528	716	9	1882	9,282	1,192	15 (10)
1865	7,358	739	8	1883	8,536	1,222	15 (11)

1. Sources: for 1848-1852 see *Annual Report of the Chamber of Commerce, 1854*; this contains tables for these years filling the gap created when the old Chamber ceased making an annual report in 1848; for 1853-1869 see *Annual Statement of the Trade and Navigation of the U.K.* and for 1870-1883 see *Annual Statement of the Navigation and Shipping of the U.K.*
2. Tonnage to the nearest '000.
3. Rank order in terms of total tonnage entry among 126 U.K. ports. As far as can be ascertained rank order figures cannot be supplied for 1848-1852. The figures in brackets indicate Bristol's rank order if tonnage entering in ballast is excluded.

insignificance as an export centre or of its region as a producer of minerals.

As has perhaps been insufficiently emphasised by previous historians of the port a very considerable proportion of the ships using Bristol were engaged in the coastal trade. As the table below shows, when the total entry tonnage is divided into that entering from abroad and that engaged in coastal trade, for every one vessel entering the port in 1848 there were twelve entering as coastal traders. This proportion had only declined to one in seven by 1883. And, although the tonnage engaged in foreign trade was steadily catching up on that involved in coastal trade throughout the fifties, sixties and seventies, it was not until the last six years of the nineteenth century that it exceeded that employed in the coastal trade. In the very active world of coastal shipping Bristol was clearly of major importance in the mid-Victorian period, being outstripped only by Liverpool, London, Glasgow, Belfast and Dublin in terms of

tonnage entering *with cargoes*. Again it was the addition of tonnage entering in ballast after 1873 which appeared to reduce its ranking.

TABLE II

*Number of vessels, sail and steam, and their tonnage entering Bristol in selected years, distinguishing those from foreign countries and British possessions from those in the coasting trade.<sup>1</sup>*

Year	Vessels from foreign countries and British possessions (numbers)	Tonnage (in '000)	Rank Order <sup>2</sup>	Vessels in coastal trade (numbers)	Tonnage (in '000)	Rank Order <sup>2</sup>
1848	541	124	—	6,674	420	—
1850	728	138	—	6,449	415	—
1855	567	130	12	5,210	401	6
1860	898	236	10	6,849	474	6
1865	797	234	11	6,561	505	6
1870	1,119	349	10	7,587	563	6
1875	1,253	402	12	8,733	664	12 (7) <sup>3</sup>
1880	1,062	516	12	8,683	713	13 (7)
1883	924	554	13	7,888	675	12 (7)

1. Sources: as in Table I
2. It is not possible to provide rank order before 1855.
3. The figures in brackets indicate Bristol's rank order if tonnage entering in ballast is excluded.

Important as Bristol was in the nation's coasting trade the tonnage entering the port from overseas also showed a major increase over the years from 1848 to 1883 much to the gratification of the Docks Committee.<sup>20</sup> From just under 125,000 tons in 1848 to over half a million tons in 1883 was no mean growth. Bristol was obviously sharing in the remarkable increase in shipping movements which characterised the national scene. Between 1850 and 1860 the total tonnage engaged in foreign trade *entering and clearing* U.K. ports, according to Mr Glover's calculations, increased by 70% and in the sixties and seventies by a further 48% and 60% respectively.<sup>21</sup> The comparable figures for Bristol were 47%, 37% and 83% respectively which tends to confirm the view that it was only after the Crimean war that Bristol was keeping pace with other ports in attracting the spectacular increases in tonnage engaged in foreign trade coming to U.K. ports. Indeed Mr Price Williams's calculations of the rate of increase per cent per annum of tonnage *entering* Liverpool, London, Hull, Southampton, Newcastle, Sunderland and Cardiff in the years 1855-1880 shows Bristol coming second only to Cardiff in this

<sup>20</sup> The revenue derived from tonnage entering from overseas was altogether much more substantial than that from coastal shipping.

<sup>21</sup> J. Glover, 'The Tonnage Statistics of the Decade 1870-1880: a sequel to two previous papers on the Decades 1850-1860 and 1860-1870 in *The Journal of the Statistical Society of London* XLV (1882) p 41.

respect.<sup>22</sup> As will be seen later this increase in tonnage from overseas using the port reflected significant changes in the staple trades of the port.

Pleasing as this growth was to the Docks Committee since it meant increased revenue it behoved it to keep a sense of proportion. As the rank order figures indicate Bristol was by no means among the leaders as far as shipping movements from overseas were concerned. London and Liverpool were in a totally different league in this respect. For instance, in 1880 tonnage entrances from abroad in London were over ten times as great as in Bristol and almost as much in Liverpool. Hull, Newcastle and Cardiff had between three and four times as much tonnage entering from overseas as Bristol. But what of the trade carried in these ships?

### *The Trade of the port of Bristol, 1848-1883*

As the table below demonstrates Bristol was not significant as an export port ranking well down among U.K. ports.

**TABLE III**

*Declared real value of the total exports of the produce of the U.K. at Bristol, 1848-1883, in thousands £s.<sup>1</sup>*

Year	Amount	Rank Order	Year	Amount	Rank Order
1848	147	—	1866	322	21
1849	221	—	1867	215	22
1850	262	—	1868	345	21
1851	276	—	1869	348	21
1852	308	—	1870	384	20
1853	660	—	1871	471	22
1854	633	—	1872	566	22
1855	383	—	1873	554	23
1856	466	—	1874	550	23
1857	761	15	1875	500	23
1858	538	16	1876	408	24
1859	461	15	1877	462	22
1860	491	15	1878	403	25
1861	348	17	1879	923	19
1862	298	17	1880	1,763	15
1863	342	19	1881	1,369	17
1864	290	19	1882	1,443	18
1865	292	20	1883	1,107	20

1. Sources: as in Table I.

Bristol's exports of U.K. produce consisted of small quantities of a fairly wide range of goods as might be expected from a hinterland which did not produce vast amounts of a particular export commodity such as Lancashire's cotton goods or the coal of S. Wales. The principal exports of U.K. produce can be tabulated as follows.

<sup>22</sup> See the tables printed in the discussion of Mr Glover's paper in *ibid* pp 76-81.

TABLE IV

*Principal exports of the produce of the U.K. in quantities from Bristol in selected years.<sup>1</sup>*

Year	Chemical Products (value in £s)	Coal (tons)	Cotton, piece goods (yds)	Firearms, small (numbers)	gunpowder (lbs)	Iron, Pig, Bar, Bolt Wire & castings (tons)
1857	—	13,555	6,988,498	—	—	—
1860	—	10,223	6,426,385	—	—	1,825
1865	—	10,085	1,365,530	23,245	574,156	1,366
1870	—	11,854	2,887,479	23,407	1,023,370	420
1875	18,083	6,941	1,321,800	16,773	491,990	269
1883	29,775	9,908	790,400	18,849	659,100	2,970

  

Year	Iron, all other kinds (tons)	Linen piece goods (yds)	Machinery (value in £s)	Oil Seed (gallons)	Railroad iron (tons)	Woollen Manufactures (yds)
1857	3,119	46,920	37,700	3,001	—	11,430
1860	743	55,260	34,152	2,615	31,374	1,814
1865	692	3,934	69,509	2,885	10,328	9,912
1870	3,083	25,567	7,443	5,439	21,486	20,456
1875	9,149	18,100	8,753	6,452	4,411	26,206
1883	46,546	34,200	2,633	255,900	6,534	5,800

1. Sources as in Table I.



To these exports of United Kingdom produce there has to be added Bristol's re-exports if a complete picture is to be obtained of her outgoing trade. The chief of these re-exports as one might expect, were a few items which reflected Bristol's traditional ties with the West Indies, West Africa, N. America and France and Spain, particularly wine, rum, tobacco and palm oil. The quantities involved were insufficient to qualify the judgement that Bristol was scarcely an important export port.

However, as far as imports were concerned the picture was substantially different. Limited in range of years as it necessarily is, the table below demonstrates that Bristol's imports were valued at many times that of her exports (see Table IV for comparison) and her rank order among U.K. ports was considerably higher as an importer than as an exporter.

TABLE V

*Value of total imports of foreign and colonial merchandise at Bristol, 1872-1883 in thousands £s<sup>1</sup>*

Year	Amount	Rank Order	Year	Amount	Rank Order
1872	7,037	7	1878	6,838	11
1873	7,607	8	1879	7,275	9
1874	7,095	8	1880	8,482	9
1875	6,912	8	1881	7,760	8
1876	7,279	9	1882	7,880	9
1877	7,029	10	1883	8,482	9

Source: *Annual statement of the trade of the U.K.* The practice of publishing the value as well as the quantities of the total imports of foreign and colonial merchandise at the principal ports seems to have begun in 1872.

More information is available about the *quantities* of Bristol's imports than their value. Analysis of these shows that significant changes were occurring in the import pattern in the mid Victorian period. Broadly speaking the port acquired new trades as an importer of corn, petroleum, metal ores, especially zinc, glass and oil seed cake while some traditional trades such as the import of coffee, cocoa and tea dwindled to negligible proportions while others such as that of wines and spirits and Mediterranean fruit continued to flourish. The table below illustrates this in some detail.

The changing pattern of Bristol's imports reflected Britain's growing dependence on imports of food for both man and beast. By the early sixties it was clear that even in a year of excellent domestic harvest imports of corn of no mean order were needed if the British people were to be fed, as had long been the case when harvests were middling or poor. Bristol's port profited from this necessity aided by some aggressive entrepreneurial activity especially by William Proctor Baker.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup>For whom see W.G. Neale, *op cit* pp 42-7.

TABLE VI

*Principal Imports of Foreign and Colonial produce in selected years at Bristol (in quantities)<sup>1</sup>*

Year	Animals, live all kinds (numbers)	Cocoa (lbs)	Coffee (lbs)	Corn <sup>2</sup> (cwts)	Fruit, currants & raisins (cwts)	Fruits Oranges & Lemons (bushels) <sup>3</sup>	Glass all kinds (cwts)
1848	—	614,350	391,950	8,262	41,227	26,115	—
1855	—	1,037,484	423,574	7,255	31,690	67,400	—
1860	—	7,290	2,136	328,091	27,319	110,629	—
1865	—	14,000	1,649	1,918,224	43,284	118,942	—
1870	10	—	381	2,239,434	12,296	165,034	—
1875	—	108	14	4,139,102	81,962	132,614	37,554
1880	37,156	—	3	6,826,699	50,088	135,614	49,382
1883	18,149	5,959	2	9,420,025	65,976	114,523	49,028

  

Year	Guano (tons)	Hemp (cwts)	Hides raw (cwts)	Oil Seed cake (tons)	Palm Oil (gallons)	Petroleum (gallons)	Provisions: Bacon and Ham (cwts)
1848	—	16,815	8,329	—	30,851	—	—
1855	13,058	26,322	51,289	—	93,308	—	—
1860	15,192	9,243	28,840	1,537	99,085	—	4,040
1865	6,713	15,572	61,973	2,517	73,437	—	6,172
1870	2,194	3,050	96,050	5,954	83,064	—	1,199
1875	1,706	7,561	76,365	12,570	51,991	1,409,491	11,595
1880	2,594	461	89,691	29,408	79,855	3,928,810	182,655
1883	3,380	2,657	67,340	29,105	36,120	4,413,860	92,250

Year	Provisions cheese (cwts)	Provisions potatoes (cwts)	Spirits <sup>4</sup> all kinds (gallons)	Sugar <sup>5</sup> unrefined (cwts)	Sugar refined (cwts)
1848	—	—	232,316	502,817	—
1855	—	—	267,782	630,354	—
1860	14,413	—	574,224	858,549	13,336
1865	13,111	—	502,397	1,141,324	59,906
1870	21,695	—	843,011	1,376,854	180,736
1875	47,400	289,548	621,101	1,640,605	197,827
1880	131,478	344,236	364,464	851,045	226,070
1883	95,915	212,884	357,607	941,750	184,391

  

Year	Tallow (cwts)	Tea (lbs)	Tobacco unmanufactured (lbs)	Timber, all kinds (loads)	Wine (gallons)	Wool, sheep and lambs (lbs)	Zinc, crude and manufactured (cwts)
1848	61,918	790,205	1,872,423	69,302	229,186	115,762	72
1855	85,494	1,485,171	1,871,891	40,393	277,847	133,326	—
1860	47,337	177	1,213,735	116,140	369,952	18,761	—
1865	32,733	240	386,951	84,345	472,291	5,880	1
1870	63,382	91	249,862	140,172	609,725	450	606
1875	50,814	31	471,864	125,153	728,193	83	50,629
1880	43,034	125	1,468,597	143,758	603,996	34,272	60,482
1883	46,686	405	1,239,065	126,747	525,933	29,792	105,594

1. Sources as in Table I.
2. Corn includes wheat, barley, oats, pease, beans, Indian corn and wheat meal and flour. In 1848 60,010 *quarters* of wheat, barley and oats were imported as well as the 8,262 *cwts* of flour shown in the table and in 1855 51,252 *quarters* of wheat, barley and oats came in as well as the 7,255 *cwts* of flour shown in the table.
3. The figure for 1848 is for boxes not bushels.
4. Spirits include rum, brandy, Geneva and 'other unsweetened spirits'.
5. The figures for 1848 and 1855 are for *all* sugar imports, thereafter figures are available for refined and unrefined imports.

However, valuable as the expanding trade in corn was to the Docks Committee it is as well to emphasise that in no trade, corn included, did Bristol's imports constitute more than a small percentage of the nation's imports.<sup>24</sup> In no commodity did Bristol's businessmen build up a commanding position as importers and dealers as say London's merchants did in the tea trade. Nevertheless in one respect the port was rather more important in the national setting than might appear at first sight: from the Treasury point of view Bristol was a significant contributor to the national exchequer. Her imports included considerable quantities of dutiable goods so that, as the Table below shows, her rank order among contributors to Customs and Excise revenue was high. Year after year in the mid-Victorian era she was worth over a million to the national finances. One consequence was that the Customs establishment in Bristol was substantial by the standards of the time, numbering between 130 and 140 employees at mid-century.<sup>25</sup>

TABLE VII

*Gross amount of Customs duty received at Bristol, 1848-1883 in thousands £s*

Year	Amount	Rank Order	Year	Amount	Rank Order
1848	1,037	—	1866	1,174	4
1849	1,042	—	1867	1,110	4
1850	1,052	—	1868	1,120	4
1851	1,101	—	1869	1,184	4
1852	1,020	—	1870	1,000	4
1853	1,194	—	1871	879	5
1854	1,228	—	1872	1,030	3
1855	1,112	—	1873	942	4
1856	1,193	3	1874	740	5
1857	1,211	3	1875	705	5
1858	1,296	3	1876	686	5
1859	1,284	3	1877	692	5
1860	1,219	3	1878	684	5
1861	1,336	3	1879	720	5
1862	1,317	3	1880	736	5
1863	1,151	4	1881	794	5
1864	1,103	3	1882	830	5
1865	1,106	4	1883	842	5

All in all, then, the considerable increase in the trade and shipping using the port might be thought to justify municipal management in the generation following the Transfer Act of 1848. However, there were those who did not think so and accused the Docks Committee of having pursued a shortsighted, unenterprising and mistaken policy in sticking to 'Home Improvements' instead of developing either river-

<sup>24</sup> e.g. in 1897 Bristol's imports of grain only amounted to 8% of total U.K. imports of grain (see B.W.E. Alford, *op cit* p 272).

<sup>25</sup> Wines, spirits, tobacco and currants were the chief dutiable imports at Bristol. *PRO Customs* 70/155 shows that in 1848 there were 138 customs officers.



mouth docks or dockising the Avon itself by building a barrage across it and making it non tidal. No one made the case against the Committee's policy more eloquently than a member of the Committee itself, Mr 'Garibaldi' Smith<sup>26</sup> in 1879.

He argued that the half a million pounds or so spent on 'Home Improvements' was largely wasted since such improvements could never make the Avon and the Floating Harbour fit to accommodate large ocean going steamships bringing rapidly increasing quantities of North American wheat and maize to Britain. The money, he claimed, could have been far better spent on developing a dock at the rivermouth for this traffic instead of allowing private companies to do so at Avonmouth and Portishead and thus producing competition which was injurious to the Committee's city docks.<sup>27</sup> Mr 'Garibaldi' Smith was correct in believing that the opening of Avonmouth dock in 1877 and Portishead in 1879 produced such competition.<sup>28</sup> He might also have added that members of the Docks Committee had positively encouraged the competition since two rival groups on the Committee had been active in their personal capacities in promoting the private companies which had constructed the rivermouth docks.<sup>29</sup> Indeed in the case of Portishead the city council itself had subscribed £100,000 to help it on its way.<sup>30</sup> And, to put the crown on it all, the Docks Committee in 1879 had rejected 'Garibaldi' Smith's advice that it should buy out the private companies to end their damaging competition only to come round to accepting this and doing so in 1883. In short there seemed to be a formidable case to answer.

Likewise schemes for improving the port by dockising the Avon which surfaced frequently only to be aborted<sup>31</sup> implied that the Docks

<sup>26</sup> So called from his physical resemblance to the Italian leader.

<sup>27</sup> *Minutes 1879-1883* provide ample evidence.

<sup>28</sup> *BRO Statistical Books*, vol 2 f 140ff where Girdlestone pinpoints this in writing 'the American trade is being more and more diverted to Avonmouth by the steamers of the Anchor and Great Western Lines which now sail there regularly from N.Y. Baltimore etc. and which by reason of their size, length and draught the owners refuse to lay on the berth for Bristol'.

<sup>29</sup> The chief promoters of Avonmouth were P.W.S. Miles of Kingsweston House whose brother was Docks Member 1848-1878; Colonel Robert Bush, Docks Member 1866-1877; Christopher Thomas, Docks Member 1866-1877; Charles Nash, Docks Member 1853-1878 and Deputy Chairman 1858-1872; Thomas T. Taylor, Docks Member 1863-1878; Robert Bright, former leader of the Free Port agitation and Henry A. Palmer. For accounts of the creation of Avonmouth and its rail connections see E. Thomas, *Down the Mouth* (Bristol 2nd ed. 1981) and M. Vincent, *Lines to Avonmouth* (Oxford, 1979). The chief subscribers to Portishead were Sir Greville Smyth of Ashton Court; Alderman James Ford, Docks Member 1856-1877 and Deputy Chairman 1873-1877; Lewis Fry, Docks Member 1866-1869; J.D. Weston, Docks Member 1884-1886; T. Canning, Docks Member 1870-1; and J.C. Wall, Docks Member 1876-1886; for an account of the creation of Portishead and its rail connection see B. Brown and J. Loosely, *The Book of Portishead* (Buckingham, 1982).

<sup>30</sup> The city council voted on 1 July 1872 36 to 19 in favour of subscribing to the Portishead Company, nine members of the Docks Committee voting with the majority and eight with the minority.

<sup>31</sup> For those of the fifties see C. Wells, *A Short History of the Port of Bristol* (1909) chap. VII.

Committee was insufficiently enterprising. Indeed Thomas Howard, the long serving Docks Engineer and Francis Girdlestone, the energetic and competent Secretary to the Committee in the early eighties were enthusiastic proponents of dockisation. The latter argued that in spite of the building of Avonmouth and Portishead and improvements in Bristol the tendency of the import trade, corn apart, was to shrink rather than grow. What was needed, he maintained, was a wholly new traffic in the form of the Atlantic passenger trade. Dockisation would bring this about by providing facilities for 'the largest class of Atlantic ships' while the completion of the G.W.R.'s tunnel under the Severn would enable Bristol to become a major coal exporting centre and coaling station since wagons would be able to proceed from the colliery in S. Wales to the ship's side in Bristol more rapidly and cheaply than to Birkenhead or Liverpool. If Manchester could press ahead with its ship canal why not Bristol with dockising the Avon?<sup>32</sup>

Nevertheless a defence of the Docks Committee's policy of 'Home Improvements' can be made. When it was adopted in 1861 it would have required extraordinary prophetic powers to forecast that the trade in American wheat and maize would burgeon in the way it did in the seventies and eighties. In 1861 the U.S.A. was torn by a civil war whose end result no one could predict with confidence and at that time the trade in American corn was far from spectacular. It was by no means easy to forecast the developments in American agriculture, internal transport and sharply reduced transatlantic freight rates which led to the flood of mid west wheat and maize pouring into Britain in the seventies and eighties.<sup>33</sup>

In the early sixties when the allegedly misaken policy of not going for docks at the rivermouth was adopted a substantial proportion of the increasing amount of corn reaching Bristol (see Table VI) appears to have been coming from the Black Sea ports. Before 1873 no precise information seems to exist as to the countries of origin of Bristol's corn imports nevertheless the tonnage entering the port from different countries is known and is suggestive, as the table below indicates.

TABLE VIII

*Tonnage entering Bristol from selected countries*

Year	United States <sup>2</sup>	Russia (Black Sea and Sea of Azof) Turkey, Wallachia and Moldavia <sup>3</sup>
1861	40,977	28,280

<sup>32</sup> *BRO Statistical Books* vol 3 ff 90-112 and f 175 for additional paragraphs to a lengthy memorandum which contains elaborate calculations designed to show that the scheme was economically viable.

<sup>33</sup> The depreciation of the U.S. dollar during the civil war stimulated the remarkable growth of American maize imports to the U.K. (see G.L.S. Broomhall and J.H. Hubback, *Corn Trade Memories, recent and remote*, (Liverpool, 1930) p 35.

1862	46,723	44,860
1863	26,584	29,807
1864	17,798	28,639
1865	8,324	51,646
1866	16,662	47,634
1867	16,991	60,846
1868	20,267	58,713
1869	40,966	60,782
1870	43,753	67,107
1871	65,192	66,835
1872	61,215	89,628

1. Source: *Annual Statement of the Trade and Navigation of the U.K. 1860-1870* and *Annual Statement of the Navigation and Shipping of the U.K. 1870-1872*.
2. Both northern and southern Atlantic ports.
3. Tonnage totalled from these countries.

When information about the countries of origin of Bristol's corn imports becomes available from 1873 onwards the supposition that much of the tonnage entering from the Black Sea was carrying corn is confirmed as is also the importance of this trade for the port. The table below shows clearly, however, that it was a trade which fluctuated considerably according to harvest conditions.<sup>34</sup>

TABLE IX

*Imports of corn<sup>1</sup> in thousands of cwt.<sup>2</sup>*

Year	U.S.A.	Canada	Black Sea <sup>3</sup>
1873	1,713	34	1,951
1874	1,496	153	2,010
1875	1,591	94	2,116
1876	1,935	23	2,388
1877	2,395	251	1,431
1878	4,196	254	2,362
1879	3,396	628	2,073
1880	4,462	533	1,700
1881	3,633	316	2,577
1882	2,410	200	4,942
1883	2,840	292	5,062

1. Corn means wheat, barley, oats, maize and wheaten meal and flour.
2. Source: *P.R.O. Customs 23*.
3. Imports from Russia, Turkey in Europe, Wallachia (Roumania) and Bulgaria.

<sup>34</sup> For a useful general survey of the Russian export trade in wheat see M.E. Falkus, Russia and the international wheat trade 1861-1914 in *Economica* xxxiii (1966) pp 416-429. G.J.S. Broomhall and J.H. Hubback, *op cit* note that Liverpool did not play a major role in this Black Sea trade but that Bristol, Hull and London did so. Liverpool corn importers felt aggrieved that the railway companies offered cheaper freight rates for transporting corn from Bristol to Birmingham than from Liverpool to that city although the distances were similar. This was an important advantage for Bristol since only a quarter of her imports of corn were for local consumption, three quarters being sent inland by railway and canal (see *BRO Statistical Books* vol 2 f 210).

TABLE X

*Entrance of shipping to Bristol in selected years, distinguishing sail and steam.<sup>1</sup>*

Year	From foreign countries and British possessions						Coastal					
	Sail (numbers)	Total Tonnage <sup>2</sup>	Average Size (tons)	Steam (numbers)	Total Tonnage <sup>2</sup>	Average Size (tons)	Sail (numbers)	Total Tonnage <sup>2</sup>	Average Size (tons)	Steam (numbers)	Total Tonnage <sup>2</sup>	Average Size (tons)
1855	562	129	229	5	8	160	3,843	169	44	1,367	232	168
1860	882	233	264	16	3	187	5,093	209	41	1,756	265	151
1865	742	220	296	55	14	254	4,495	183	41	2,066	323	156
1870	995	317	318	124	31	250	4,861	199	41	2,726	364	133
1875	1,038	298	287	215	104	484	5,397	229	42	2,881	410	142
1880	735	272	370	327	244	746	5,321	239	45	3,362	474	141
1883	451	168	372	473	385	814	4,091	190	46	3,245	442	136

1. Source: *Annual Statement of the Trade and Navigation of the U.K.* and *Annual Statement of the Navigation and Shipping of the U.K.*

2. Tonnage to the nearest '000

As can be seen from the following table (Table X) much of this corn trade, as with Bristol's foreign trade in general, up to the eighties at least, was carried in sailing or steamships of a size quite capable of negotiating the Avon and using the Floating Harbour. Steamships were already by mid-century an important constituent of the *coastal* shipping using the port but it was not until the mid seventies that this became true in Bristol's foreign trade and it was not until the early eighties that the tonnage entering the port from abroad was driven more by steam than by wind and the size of steamships really began to outstrip that of sailing vessels.

In short it may be argued that in the sixties and seventies a policy of 'Home Improvements' made sense: it suited the substantial trade in corn from the Black Sea. Such a judgement can be reinforced by a glance at the history of the new rivermouth docks promoted by private enterprise. Although they were capable of inflicting damaging competition on the city docks sufficient in the end to provoke the counterattack of buying them out,<sup>35</sup> they were far from flourishing concerns. Some of the success they had in diverting ships from the city docks was attributable to what Francis Girdlestone called their 'bribery' in levying dues and stevedoring charges at such low rates as to jeopardize the generation of sufficient income to meet operating expenditure and interest payments on their loan capital.<sup>36</sup> Indeed there was also much to be said from the Docks Committee's point of view for letting entrepreneurs take the risk of building Avonmouth and Portishead. The basic facts about Avonmouth, the more successful of the two projects, highlight the risks: the original estimated cost of making the first dock was £383,000 but in fact it cost £671,000.<sup>37</sup> By contrast the original estimated cost of twenty years of the 'Home Improvements' programme was £524,957 and the actual cost £517,417.<sup>38</sup> Under the original private act of 1864<sup>39</sup> Avonmouth docks should have been completed in 1871 but it was not opened for traffic until 1877. As for Portishead, it cost at least double the original estimate and unforeseen disasters in construction led to the Board of Trade having to sanction extra time for completion on no less than four occasions. Without doubt from a constructional point of view these were high risk operations. In the three years 1880-1882 during which Avonmouth was fully operational as a private enterprise it

<sup>35</sup> The mayor in his speech urging the city council to agree to the purchase of the rivermouth docks maintained that in the worst year of the era of competition the Docks Committee's income dropped by £16,000. (*BRO Statistical Books* vol 3 f 344ff Extracts from the Mayor's speech).

<sup>36</sup> *BRO Statistical Books* vol. 2 ff 184-197 F.B. Girdlestone to Messrs Prichard and Gibson 23 Feb. 1882. Girdlestone thought the ultimate object was to force up the price at which the city would be forced to buy the rivermouth docks.

<sup>37</sup> See *Return relating to Harbours giving description of works executed within the last twenty years* (*Parliamentary Papers* 1883 H.C.313 LXII p 6). No return was made for Portishead.

<sup>38</sup> *BRO Statistical Books* vol 3 ff 269-273 for a detailed list of original estimates and actual costs.

<sup>39</sup> 27 & 28 Vict., cap. ccxli.

received a tonnage averaging 164,000 tons a year, about a seventh of that entering the city docks annually in these years.<sup>40</sup> Between 1881 and 1883 when Portishead was fully operational an average of 56,000 tons of shipping entered.<sup>41</sup>

Although it is not easy to arrive at wholly reliable figures for the financial affairs of the rivermouth docks it is reasonably clear that in the early eighties they were far from producing a satisfactory return on the capital invested in them. This may be demonstrated by a brief examination of the financial calculations that lay behind the city's purchase. To put it baldly the city paid considerably less for the two docks and their warehouses (£550,000 for Avonmouth and £250,000 for Portishead) than they had cost to construct. Yet it was impossible to demonstrate that even at this in effect written down capital value the two docks were producing enough *net* income to cover the interest payments (£23,550 p.a.) which the city would have to meet immediately when it borrowed the purchase price.<sup>42</sup> According to the audited accounts, Girdlestone said in briefing his Chairman of the Docks Committee in February 1884, the net revenue from the two docks was £20,704. Earlier calculations had put it lower. The Secretary was quite right to suggest that the city was not getting 'a wonderful bargain'.<sup>43</sup> The rivermouth docks were just not prospering enterprises and hence there is, then, a case for believing that the Committee had been wise after all to go for 'Home Improvements' in 1861.

As for dockising the Avon three considerations, it may be suggested, justified the Committee in not venturing on any such project. First it was bound to be exceptionally expensive to put a barrage across the Avon since this would also entail costly works to divert Bristol's sewage. To put it bluntly, the Floating Harbour was not only Bristol's port but also its cesspool. The bulk of the city's sewage was discharged into it.<sup>44</sup> A barrage across the Avon would turn the river also into a cesspool and prevent the action of the tides from carrying away such of the sewage which escaped from the Floating Harbour. The remedy was major works to convey it to the Severn seven miles away. Thomas Howard, the Docks Engineer, included £250,000 for this in his dockising scheme of the early eighties.<sup>45</sup> Secondly there

<sup>40</sup> See *Return relating to Harbours op cit* p 6.

<sup>41</sup> *BRO Statistical Books*, vol 3 f 197, provides figures for Portishead: 1880 2,254 tons; 1881 57,498; 1882 67,117 and 1883 44,181.

<sup>42</sup> *BRO Statistical Books* vol 3 ff 344-5 Extract from the Mayor's speech.

<sup>43</sup> *ibid* ff 352-4 F.B. Girdlestone to C.H. Low 25 Feb. 1884 'strong points to put before the citizens'. Girdlestone observed that the audited figure of £20,704 p.a. was nearly £3,000 p.a. more than the figure quoted earlier by the Mayor as the one agreed to by him and the Committee. Girdlestone himself made elaborate calculations based on the year May 1st 1882 to April 30 1883 which showed a net revenue from the two docks from all possible sources of as little as £12,674 (see *ibid* ff 335-8).

<sup>44</sup> For examples of pollution being given by the Committee for drains to discharge into the Float see e.g. *Minutes* 15 July, 12 Aug. 1867. Many were the complaints of the stench from the Float see e.g. *Bristol Gazette* 11 Aug. 1842.

<sup>45</sup> *BRO Statistical Books* vol 3 f 112 Appendix A for Howard's estimate of the cost of his scheme including this item.

was bound to be some uncertainty whatever the experts said about what the precise effect of a barrage across the Avon would have on the deep water channel in the Severn on which the very existence of Bristol as a port depended and also on the outlet of the Avon into the Severn. Once Avonmouth dock had been built it would not do to construct a barrage which had the effect of destroying it. Lastly, dockising the Avon usually had as its object attracting a substantial new traffic of passenger carrying transatlantic liners. The chances of doing so were not high. Liverpool and Southampton had established an early and increasingly massive lead over Bristol in this traffic. They were unlikely to yield gracefully to an ambitious rival. Furthermore Bristol was geographically less advantageously situated than Southampton. Atlantic liners frequently carried passengers and freight destined for Europe as well as Britain. It made sense for them to use the English Channel for calls at Southampton and Le Havre or Cherbourg or Hamburg rather than the Bristol Channel. Bristol could not match Southampton's proximity to and easy connections with the continent.

September 1884 when the Docks Committee took over management of both the rivermouth docks and the city docks was certainly a landmark in its history. It marked the end of that competition between them which Mayor Weston described as 'pregnant with a great deal of evil to the city'.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore the city council had staved off proposals that the various port facilities should be run in future by a Harbour Commission or Trust rather than the municipality<sup>47</sup> and had instead added substantially to its Dock Estate. For a while the city docks recaptured much, though not all the corn trade that had been lost to Avonmouth and Portishead. New mills and granaries on the wharves of the city docks increased their capacity for handling the trade so that by 1895 three times as much grain was being imported through the city docks as through Avonmouth and Portishead.<sup>48</sup>

Nevertheless this would not last. The advance of the steamship saw to that. By 1883 steamships had virtually caught up with sailing vessels in terms of numbers using the port. In 1863 the proportion of steamers to sailing vessels entering with cargoes had been 1 to 3; by 1873 it was 1 to 2 and by 1883 to 1<sup>1/10</sup>.<sup>49</sup> Nor was Bristol in the van in the advance of the steamer: Southampton, for instance, was far ahead in the number and tonnage of steamships entering and clearing her port.<sup>50</sup> By the eighties and nineties the average steam driven cargo ship was growing markedly in length and size, steel was

<sup>46</sup> *ibid*, vol 3 ff 344-5.

<sup>47</sup> *ibid*, vol 2 f 92ff 119ff for elaborate financial calculations for a scheme to form a Bristol Port Trust.

<sup>48</sup> W.G. Neale, *op cit* p 17 for a table of grain imports.

<sup>49</sup> L.F.V. Harcourt, *Harbours and Docks* (Oxford, 1885) i 542 for the figures evidently based on the *Annual Statements of Trade and Navigation*.

<sup>50</sup> See *Annual Statements of Trade and Navigation*.



replacing iron in hull construction and more fuel efficient engines meant that such advantages as sailing vessels had retained for long voyages were being whittled away.<sup>51</sup> Clearly the city docks would not be able to accommodate the larger vessels: no ship of over 330 ft in length could negotiate the Horseshoe bend on the Avon.

Not surprisingly clamour began again in Bristol in the early nineties for dock extension and once again dockising the Avon or extending the facilities at either Avonmouth or Portishead formed the agenda for a lengthy, confused and sometimes bitter debate. And once again little happened initially. For a decade William Proctor Baker, the miller of Redcliffe, fought a tremendous rearguard action to prevent the Docks Committee investing in new facilities at the rivermouth. And once again a case might be made for maintaining that his opposition was more fruitful than it might appear at first sight. The scheme which he had successfully opposed in 1892 had envisaged creating a second new dock at Avonmouth with an entrance lock of 730 ft and a width of 85 ft. So rapidly was the size of new ships increasing in the nineties, however, that if this project had been proceeded with the city council would have been lumbered with an inadequate facility. As it was, in 1900, when Proctor Baker had given up the struggle, the Docks Committee thought it wise to increase the length of what became the Royal Edward Dock in 1908 to 875 ft and its width to 100 ft.<sup>52</sup> For fifty years thereafter this was to prove sufficient.

<sup>51</sup> S. Pollard and P. Robertson, *The British Shipbuilding Industry, 1870–1914* (1979) chap 1 for a concise summary of these developments.

<sup>52</sup> W.G. Neale, *op cit*, pp 20–26; C. Wells, *op cit*, Chaps XI and XII.

## A NOTE ON THE RECORDS

The surviving manuscript materials for the history of Bristol's port in the nineteenth century consist, for the first half of the century, of ten volumes of the minute books (1791–1848) of the Bristol Dock Company, the private concern which operated the port until municipalization in 1848. The minute books are supplemented by annual accounts (1808–1874); letter books (1803–1848); miscellaneous reports (1827–1848) I.K. Brunel's reports to the company's Directors (1827–1848) and the Superintendant's reports (1843–1849), the whole forming a most valuable corpus.

For the period with which this volume is concerned, 1848–1884, the manuscript records fall into five groups: letter books; reports of sub-committees; reports of officers; statistical books and, most important of all, the minute books of the city council's Docks Committee. These minutes were kept in longhand in folio volumes each running to just over 600 pages. Ten of these volumes were required for the years 1848–1884. These 6000 pages were the product of weekly meetings of the Committee which rarely had to abandon its meetings for lack of a quorum. Their formidable bulk was swelled by the Secretary's habit of including in the minutes the full text of letters he received, although by 1876 a volume was begun of letters inward. Also in later years the Secretary pasted into the minutes the Committee's often lengthy reports to the city council. Throughout the period letters outward embodying the directions of the Committee were copied into separate volumes. The main sub-committee was that of finance (later renamed finance and general purposes). Its chief activity, as its surviving minutes show, was to examine tradesmen's accounts and to check and authorise payments.

There survives a complete set of reports to the Committee from first the Dock Superintendant, and then, his successor, the Engineer. The substance of these were recorded in the Committee's minutes. Reports to the Committee from the Havenmaster survive in separate form only from 1881, although a letter book of his begins in 1878. The Harbour Master's registers for 1870–1882 survive in twelve volumes and, lastly, of the officers' reports, the Secretary's are recorded in separate volumes from 1875. The statistical books begin in 1874 recording a range of miscellaneous material. More systematic is the

Index of Arrivals surviving from 1875 and a similar index for the city docks, Avonmouth and Portishead from 1879. It is quite clear that the Docks Committee minute books are the key record as they contain the substance and often precise form of the great bulk of the material in the rest of the records and, moreover, they survive intact for the whole period.

All the above records are now in the Bristol Record Office. In addition, recently transferred from Kings Beam House to the P.R.O. at Kew, there are the records of the Customs and Excise. The correspondence to and from the Collector of Customs at Bristol and the Board of Customs and Excise. (*P.R.O. Customs* 70/10-27 and 64-99 for 1848-1884) contains a mass of detail about customs routine, particularly relating to seizures of dutiable goods, often of innumerable small amounts of tobacco. Likewise the Surveyor's letters to the Collector (*P.R.O. Customs* 70/138-141 for 1848-1884) are chiefly concerned with the minutiae of customs administration such as applications for drawback on duty, the operation of the bonded warehouse system and so forth. The most useful statistical material in the Customs records is the series begun in 1873 (*P.R.O. Customs* 23/1-11 covering 1873-1883) which gives the country of origin and quantities of all Bristol's imports, information which is not available in the printed materials. Otherwise the statistical material in the Customs records described as Statements of Trade (*P.R.O. Customs* 70/155-6 covering 1830-1882) appear to be either the information tabulated in the published *Annual Reports of the Bristol Chamber of Commerce* (which indeed acknowledge the Bristol customs office as the source for their figures) or the information to be found from 1856 until 1870 in the *Annual Statement of the Trade and Navigation of the U.K.* and after 1870 in the two separate blue books devoted annually to trade and shipping.

As well as this printed statistical material the invaluable parliamentary papers also contain important material for the history of the port in the decades following municipalization. For example Francis Girdlestone, Secretary to the Docks Committee, gave extensive evidence, backed by statistical tables, concerning the working of the port to the Royal Commission 'inquiring into the present operation of the law for the Measurement of Tonnage' (*Parliamentary Papers* 1881 (c3074) xlix I pp 43-58 and 739-749). Likewise Captain E. Parsons R.N. (retired), the Havenmaster, and Captain James Hall, a former Bristol Channel pilot gave evidence to the Select Committee on Harbour Accommodation (*Parliamentary Papers* 1884 H.C. 290 xii Second report pp 512-5. Also the *Returns relating to Harbours giving a description of works executed within the last twenty years* (*Parliamentary Papers*, 1883 H.C. 313 lxii pp 6-8 and 166-170) provide valuable information especially for the early years of Avonmouth.

## APPENDIX: THE FINANCES OF THE PORT 1848–1883

The financial history of the port in the generation following the Dock Transfer Act of 1848 is undoubtedly complex for a number of reasons. Above all the Docks Committee was by no means master in its own house. The 1848 Act had not ended divided control of the port. The Merchant Venturers retained their lease of the wharfage, not due to expire until 1863. For use of the wharfs they charged dues. Also the city council continued to levy the Town Dues and the Mayor's Dues while the Water Bailiff, Quay Warden, Crane Master and Corn Measurer also levied dues and fees. All this was in addition to dues levied on ships according to their tonnage and on goods according to a complex tariff levied by the Docks Committee and the income it received annually from the 4d rate imposed under the 1848 Transfer Act and the £2,400 from the Poor rate under the 1803 Act. In effect the city council with one hand was levying charges on the shipping using the port in the shape of the Town Dues, Mayor's Dues etc. while on the other it was levying rates on the citizens to provide additional income for the Docks Committee to enable it to moderate its dues on ships and goods. Given that there was at times an approximate equivalence between the sums received by the city from the Town Dues, Mayor's Dues etc and the amounts coming in from the ratepayers, common sense would suggest abolishing both and leaving the Docks Committee to finance its ordinary annual expenditure solely by dues on ships and goods. Administration would thereby have been greatly simplified and port customers would not have been faced with such a jungle of charges. Commonsense did not prevail, in spite of proposals to this end.<sup>1</sup>

The table below is an attempt to present as accurately as possible the receipts from the jungle of charges and the levies on citizens.

In addition to the various dues and the rates in aid detailed in Table I there were a number of minor but growing sources of income. For instance rates were levied on inland waterway users of the Feeder canal which between 1864 and 1883 brought in amounts varying from

<sup>1</sup> e.g. *Minutes* 6 May 1861.

TABLE I'

Year	Docks Dues <sup>2</sup> on tonnage and goods	Cranage <sup>3</sup> Rates	Mayor's Dues	Water Bailiff Rate <sup>4</sup> and Wharfage Dues	Town Dues	4d rate <sup>5</sup>	Poor Rate <sup>6</sup>	Total <sup>7</sup>
1848	29,685	567	642	800	2582	—	2355	36,631
1849	28,699	675	736	889	2831	1715	2355	39,910
1850	20,993	581	722	887	2329	5599	2355	33,466
1851	22,655	519	798	835	2702	5616	2355	35,480
1852	20,995	697	697	848	2020	5650	2355	33,262
1853	20,267	439	937	897	3167	6636	2355	34,698
1854	24,416	709	992	911	2921	5502	2355	37,806
1855	21,722	804	673	828	2300	6460	2355	35,142
1856	21,145	875	757	812	2366	6460	2355	34,770
1857	27,556	456	975	917	2815	6460	2355	41,534
1858	29,105	640	1067	1009	3485	6460	2355	44,121
1859	30,820	1993	972	935	3404	6460	2355	46,939
1860	31,402	2422	1131	936	3860	6460	2355	48,566
1861	35,679	2076	1302	1785	4947	6460	2355	54,604
1862	30,361	2865	1163	6628	5136	6460	2355	54,968
1863	30,348	2665	1265	7178	5171	6460	2355	55,442
1864	26,373	2226	1175	5630	4164	7000	2355	48,923
1865	28,168	2884	1308	6073	4759	7000	2355	52,547
1866	29,035	2245	1343	6394	4946	7000	2355	52,318
1867	30,072	2999	1295	6333	4961	7000	2355	55,015
1868	30,794	2195	1396	6706	7047	8000	2355	57,493
1869	31,683	2403	1487	7115	7472	8000	2355	60,515
1870	37,426	2273	1738	8721	9046	8000	2355	69,559
1871	37,432	2262	1606	8274	8799	8000	2355	68,728
1872	38,337	1978	1647	9001	9465	8000	2358	70,786
1873	41,605	2417	1692	9668	10,729	8000	2360	76,471
1874	43,741	2635	1770	9777	10,823	8000	2360	79,106
1875	41,069	2519	1672	9385	10,971	9000	2360	76,976
1876	44,411	2462	1925	10,845	11,671	10,000	2360	83,674
1877	45,061	1812	1735	10,187	10,347	10,000	2360	81,502

1878	41,363	992	1574	9860	9488	10,000	2360	75,637
1879						12,000	2360	
1880	35,697		1330	7827	7010	12,500	2360	
1881						12,800	2360	
1888						10,000	2360	
1883						10,000	2360	

1. Sources: *B.R.O. Statistical Book* vol 1 f 60–61 for the first five columns up to 1878 and f 165 for the 4d rate figures up to 1881.
2. Tonnage dues yielded two to three times as much revenue as rates on goods. For a breakdown showing this see *BRO Statistical Books* vol 3 ff 330–1 relating to 1864–1883.
3. The sharp fall in cranage income post 1877 was attributed to ‘the decrease in sugar vessels after the end of Finzels Refinery’ and to the increased use of ship mounted hoisting gear (*ibid* vol 1 f 1 ff for a lengthy report on cranage. The figures in this column are gross receipts.
4. Gross receipts from the fees charged by the Water Bailiff and Quay Warden, wharfage dues and anchorage and moorage. The sharp increase from 1862 reflects the ending of the wharfage lease to the Merchant Venturers for which see P. McGrath, *The Merchant Venturers of Bristol* (Bristol, 1975) pp 310–3 and *Minutes passim*.
5. This is what the Docks Committee actually received. The produce of a 4d rate was a little higher (for both figures see *BRO Statistical Books* vol 1 f 165 verso).
6. As will be seen the Docks Committee did not receive the whole £2,400, apparently because costs of collection were deducted by the poor law authorities.
7. In their annual reports to the city council as recorded in their *Minutes* the Docks Committee did not provide either a consistently calculated or complete set of total receipts. In the latter half of the period particularly total receipts were often not recorded and in the earlier half on some occasions they add up the receipts from all sources except the rates in aid and on other occasions the rates in aid are included. Hence it seemed best to ignore the totals in the *Minutes* and rely on those in the *Statistical Books*.

£1,268 to £1,712 per year. Income from letting various properties in those same years yielded sums varying from £265 to £1,268 a year, while quay and shed rents which began with yielding a measly £6 in 1876 by 1883 were bringing in £1,300. Licence fees from barges and boats using the Floating Harbour yielded amounts ranging from £238 in 1871 to £995 in 1883. And lastly that inescapable item 'sundries' brought in amounts which between 1864 and 1883 varied from £1,122 to £4,204.<sup>2</sup>

The expenditure side of the account was as complicated as that of the revenue. The Docks Committee itself divided its spending into 'ordinary' and 'extraordinary' expenditure. But this did not mean that it established a clear cut distinction between spending on capital projects and operating expenses. 'Ordinary' expenditure, for instance, contained a mixture of spending on running expenses, capital items and, on occasion, the repayment of loan capital. Also for financing 'extraordinary' expenditure – capital projects such as the 'Home Improvements' or unusual maintenance work such as putting the Floating Harbour into good order in the years immediately after the Transfer Act of 1848 – it employed a confusing mixture of drawing on what it called 'excess of receipts' and raising cash by loan.

To add to the complexity the city council treated the income it received from the Cranage Rates, Mayor's Dues, Water Bailiff and Wharfage Dues and the Town Dues as a series of separate budgets offsetting against the gross income (as detailed in Table I) where appropriate, 'ordinary expenditure and expenditure on new works'. For example between 1871 and 1881 the receipts from the Town Dues were £100,559 while expenditure was £10,962 leaving a net receipt of £89,597; the Mayor's dues in the same period produced £17,410 out of which £625 was expended thus the net balance was £16,785 and the Water Bailiff and Quay Warden's fees and the wharfage, anchorage and moorage dues totalled £98,443 out of which was spent £47,877 leaving a net receipt of £50,566.<sup>3</sup> A detailed investigation of the Cranage rates showed that while 'The average annual receipts . . . for the past ten years ending 31 August 1878 had been £2,399, the average annual expense had been £2,336 leaving an average annual net income of a mere £63 p.a. The expenditure in this case consisted of £1,777 for wages; £71 for repairs; £64 for rent and taxes; £325 for salaries and £99 for stationery and incidentals all sums being annual average expenses over the ten years in question.'<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *BRO Statistical Books* vol 3 ff 330–1.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid* vol 2 f 94, for these figures. There is another more comprehensive table of net balances from these receipts in vol 2 f 129 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid* vol 1 f 1 ff, Secretary's report on Cranage which showed that James Bawn aged 65 had served for 42 years as Cranemaster, his senior clerk of the same age was blind and deaf and never went to the office, and a Mr J. Bawn, junior clerk was paid by the senior clerk to do his work. 5 more employees never 'actually turn the crane handles' and the 'actual lifting of the goods appears to be done by casual labour or lumpers 'paid by piece work at an average rate of about 4½ per ton of goods lifted'.

In short the city council's income from the port did carry some of the expenditure, both on operating costs and new works, but clearly the bulk of it was met by the Docks Committee's income from tonnage and goods dues, its aid from the rates and its loan raising operations. The main items of 'ordinary expenditure' were first the substantial interest payments it had to pay out to the holders of the debt it had inherited from the private Dock Company and the new lenders of the capital it borrowed subsequent to the Transfer Act of 1848. Secondly there were the operating costs which broadly speaking fell into two categories, maintenance of the Dock Estate which was largely the responsibility of the Engineer, and administrative costs chiefly the responsibility of the Secretary who would be dignified with the title of general manager in 1884. Salaries and wages formed an increasing part of these costs. By 1884 the Engineer's department employed 292 wage-earners including 26 carpenters, 19 enginemen, 100 labourers, 22 lightermen and 70 'dredges'. Unlike the private companies operating Avonmouth and Portishead the Docks Committee did not employ foremen and dock labourers for the loading and unloading of ships: all that was supplied by private firms.<sup>5</sup> And lastly, as previously mentioned, 'ordinary expenditure' did include a number of items ranging from fencing the New Cut to substantial contributions to the 'Home Improvements' programme which were later to be regarded as more properly capital items or in contemporary terminology 'extraordinary expenditure'.<sup>6</sup>

It is clear from the Docks Committee *Minutes* that an important consideration determining its general policy was whether there was a deficit or an excess of receipts over ordinary expenditure. Deficits led to orders, particularly to the Engineer, to economize, surpluses led to plans for new works. However in calculating deficits or excess of receipts much depended on what was counted as receipts. In their annual reports to the city council the Committee, as has previously been noted, seems to have pursued no clear or consistent policy as to what it reckoned as receipts. The table below sets out the three ways in which receipts were calculated for setting against ordinary expenditure to arrive at a 'profit' or 'loss'. In column one the receipts consist of the tonnage dues, rates on goods and gross receipts from cramage rates, Mayor's dues, Water Bailiff and Quay Warden's fees and wharfage etc. dues and the Town dues. In column 2 as well as the receipts from all these charges there is added the net produce of the rates in aid and in column 3 Mr Girdlestone's estimate of receipts from 1864 is shown which includes all receipts in columns 1 and 2 as well as income from miscellaneous sources of revenue such as canal rates, rents, license fees, sundries etc.

The story of deficits or 'profits' (if this is a permissible term) really

<sup>5</sup> *ibid* vol 4 ff 90-1. Statement showing the number of servants engaged in the Dock Estate of the Corporation of Bristol.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid* vol 2 f 141 ff for a list of 41 such items.



**TABLE II**  
*Income and Expenditure 1848-1883*

Year	(1) Receipts excluding rates in aid <sup>1</sup>	(2) Receipts including rates in aid <sup>2</sup>	(3) Girdlestone's estimate of receipts <sup>3</sup>	(4) Ordinary expenditure	(5) Deficit or 'profit using receipts in column 1	(6) Deficit or 'profit using receipts in column 2	(7) Deficit or 'profit' using receipts in column 3
1848	34,276	36,631	—	30,410	+3,866	+6,221	—
1849	33,823	37,910	—	30,585	+ 3,239	+ 7,325	—
1850	25,513	33,466	—	30,989	— 5,476	+ 2,477	—
1851	25,510	35,480	—	31,092	— 3,583	+ 4,388	—
1852	25,456	33,262	—	34,708	— 9,252	— 1,446	—
1853	25,707	34,698	—	32,714	— 7,007	+ 1,984	—
1854	29,939	37,806	—	35,391	— 5,481	+ 2,415	—
1855	26,328	35,142	—	33,066	— 6,738	+ 2,076	—
1856	25,955	34,770	—	33,123	— 7,166	+ 1,647	—
1857	32,165	41,534	—	31,145	+ 1,021	+10,389	—
1858	35,506	44,121	—	31,953	+ 3,453	+12,168	—
1859	38,124	46,939	—	32,009	+ 6,115	+14,930	—
1860	39,750	48,566	—	31,691	+ 8,060	+16,875	—
1861	45,789	54,604	—	33,379	+12,410	+21,225	—
1862	46,153	54,968	—	30,776	+15,377	+24,192	—
1863	46,627	55,442	—	29,906	+16,661	+25,536	—
1864	39,568	48,923	50,039	28,237	+11,332	+20,696	+21,802
1865	43,193	52,547	52,281	26,190	+17,003	+26,190	+26,091
1866	43,962	52,318	54,644	26,795	+17,167	+25,523	+27,849
1867	45,560	55,015	56,362	29,144	+18,978	+25,871	+27,218
1868	48,147	57,493	57,483	29,147	+19,003	+28,345	+28,336
1869	50,151	60,515	61,781	30,986	+21,014	+29,529	+30,795
1870	59,104	69,559	70,650	31,622	+28,118	+37,937	+39,028
1871	58,384	68,728	70,436	41,553	+26,761	+27,175	+28,883
1872	60,429	70,786	72,441	40,925	+18,877	+29,861	+31,516

1873	66,111	76,471	78,860	42,489	+25,785	+33,982	+36,371
1874	68,745	79,106	81,646	45,611	+26,256	+33,495	+36,035
1875	65,616	76,976	78,866	48,693	+20,006	+28,283	+30,173
1876	70,254	83,674	84,774	48,692	+21,562	+34,982	+36,082
1877	69,141	81,502	86,612	52,828	+16,313	+28,674	+33,784
1878	63,286	75,637	82,032	59,057	+ 4,229	+16,580	+22,975
1879			77,766	51,660			+26,106
1880			76,776	57,410			+19,366
1881			73,518	50,479			+23,039
1882			59,606				
1883			65,832	48,530			+17,302

1. Source for col. 1 is *BRO Statistical Books* vol 1, ff 60–1 for 1848–1878.
2. Source for col. 2 see Total column in Table I and sources referred to for that table for 1848–1878.
3. Source for col. 3 is *BRO Statistical Books* vol 3, ff 330–1 which is part of an elaborate calculation designed to provide a case for the practicality of purchasing the rivermouth docks.
4. Source for col 4 is as for col 1. The annual reports of the Committee to the council contain figures for ordinary expenditure which correspond almost exactly with these figures. For 1879–1881 see *BRO Statistical Books* vol 2 f 223.

depended on which set of receipts you chose to use. For example if you used column 1 i.e. omitting the rates in aid you produced a pattern of deficits between 1850 and 1856 followed by twenty years of rising 'profits' (with occasional dips in 1864 and 1872) until a sharp fall was recorded in 1878. Such a calculation would tend to support the view that the rates in aid were very necessary in the 1850s to balance the Committee's accounts and that subsequent surpluses were reasonable enough given that the port would have to undertake some new works involving considerable expenditure if it was to continue to attract increasing business. However, if you took into account, as Girdlestone did, *all* receipts then you could produce a case, as he in fact was doing, for saying that the 'profits' were sufficiently large to make it possible for the Docks Committee to shoulder the burden of substantial additional annual interest charges which would necessarily be incurred in borrowing to purchase the rivermouth docks. Columns 5, 6 and 7 demonstrate the different patterns of deficit and 'profit' which emerge from taking different calculations of receipts.

'Ordinary expenditure', as column 4 shows, remained more or less steady for many years down to 1871 but then increased fairly sharply mainly because interest payments on capital borrowed for the 'Home Improvements' programme are included in the 'ordinary expenditure' account.

Finally what of extraordinary or capital expenditure? Between 1848 and 1882, according to Girdlestone's return for the Board of Trade in 1883, £345,311 was raised by loan, £348,015 came from surplus dock revenue and £29,264 from 'city funds' for 'extraordinary expenditure making a total of £722,590.' The borrowed money was raised on bonds varying from three to seven years, the security virtually always being the Dock Estate and the Borough Fund.<sup>8</sup> For most of the money 4% interest had to be paid. As the bonds matured they were paid off with fresh money borrowed on 3½% Debenture Stock issued under the authority of the Bristol Dock Act, 1881. The bulk of the 'extraordinary expenditure' went on 'Home Improvements' and putting the Floating Harbour into order following the Transfer Act. All in all capital expenditure at Bristol was not spectacular. For instance in the twenty years ending 31 December 1882 the Docks Committee spent £578,500. This amounted to 1.7% of all port investment in England and Wales during these years.<sup>9</sup> Bristol's spending was dwarfed by that at Liverpool and Birkenhead where in these two decades about £7½m was spent, or the investment in the same period of £3.3m by the Tyne Commissioners. Bristol fell

<sup>7</sup> *Parliamentary Papers* H.C. 313 vol lxiii (1883) *Returns relating to Harbours*.

<sup>8</sup> *BRO Statistical Books* vol 2 f 87. Memorandum of security given to various Dock Bond-holders.

<sup>9</sup> The total of port investment in England and Wales has been calculated from Table 1 in A.G. Kenwood, *Port investment in England and Wales, 1851-1913* in *Yorkshire Bulletin of Economic and Social Research* (1965) p 157.

into the category of Swansea (£592,758), Leith (£625,000) and Belfast (£587,219) as far as capital investment was concerned.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> The figures for other ports are to be found in *Returns relating to Harbours* for which see note 7.



## EDITORIAL METHOD

The minutes of the Docks Committee were often very lengthy, particularly from the early eighteen sixties onwards when it took to printing its reports to Council often in small type. Hence a mixture of selective transcription and calendaring has had to be used. Omissions are indicated by . . . and where calendaring has been resorted to this is indicated by (Calendared). Editorial insertions used to reduce verbiage are distinguished by square brackets.

It has been a help in selecting material that there is much routine business which can safely be ignored, particularly the innumerable requests to the Committee for the level of water in the Float to be lowered. Also thanks to W.G. Neale's valuable *At the port of Bristol, 1848-1889* which contains a study of the personnel of the Committee it has not been thought necessary to include all details of membership and changes therein. Some topics such as pilotage in which many individual cases were dealt with by the Committee have had to be given limited attention. Also since the Float was in the heart of the city the general public came into daily contact with it, sometimes to their detriment. Again only limited attention has been given to topics such as ferries which reflected the unusual site of the docks. Major attention has been focussed on policy questions such as 'Home Improvements' versus rivermouth docks or the fierce and complicated struggle between Avonmouth, Portishead and the City Docks in the late seventies and early eighties. Virtually all the Committee's reports to Council have been included since these provide a running commentary on how the Committee saw the trade and finances of the port developing or failing to develop. Much has been included which illustrates the role of the Engineer and the unending task of trying to improve the port whether it be in providing adequate shed accommodation or better access to it either by rail or by river.



**City of Bristol: Docks Committee Vol. No. 1.  
31 August 1848–30 December 1851**

At a meeting of the Bristol Docks Committee held at the Bristol Docks Office No. 18 Queen Square on Thursday the 31st day of August 1848

**Present**

Richard Poole King Esq. in the chair; Mr. Robinson; Mr. Visger; Mr. Christopher Thomas; Mr. Vining; Mr. G.E. Sanders; Mr. Phippen; Mr. Naish; Mr. Goldney; Mr. Poole; Mr. Jarman; Mr. Tothill.<sup>1</sup>

**Extract from the proceedings of the Council**

The Committee<sup>2</sup> appointed by the Council in relation to the Bristol Dock Transfer presented their Report which having been read and considered Ordered that the same be received and adopted and entered at the foot of these proceedings.

The Town Clerk then submitted to the Meeting a print of the Act passed in the present Session of parliament and referred to in the Report of the committee intituled "An Act for facilitating the Transfer of the Bristol Docks to the Mayor Aldermen and Burgesses of the City and for other purposes".<sup>3</sup>

The Town Clerk then reported that a Deed prepared in conformity with the provisions of the Act for the Transfer of the Docks from the Company incorporated by the said Act to the Corporation had been settled by himself on behalf of the Corporation and by Mr. Robert Osborne Solicitor<sup>5</sup> on the part of the Company and that such deed had been executed by the Company and that Mr. Osborne was in attendance for the purpose of submitting the same to the Meeting of the Council and obtaining the execution thereof by the Corporation.

Thereupon Mr. Osborne was called in and produced such Deed. And the same was read by the Town Clerk and approved by the Council.

And it was ordered that the City Seal should be affixed to such Deed in duplicate – and the seal was fixed accordingly.

Resolved that it is expedient for the purposes of the Bristol Dock Act 1848 that application be made to the Justices to order and



appoint what amount shall be deemed the amount raiseable in the year commencing on the first day of May 1848 by a Borough Rate for the said City and County of four pence in the pound and thereupon the Council made the following Order.

It is ordered by the Council that a Committee consisting of fifteen members of the Council be appointed for regulating and managing the affairs of the Bristol Docks and other purposes of the Bristol Dock Act 1848 and be called “The Docks Committee”.

Resolved unanimously that the following members of the Council to wit. Richard Poole King; George Thomas; James Gibbs; Harman Visger; Richard Robinson; William Tothill; William Goldney; Francis Jarman; John Vining; George Eddie Sanders; John William Miles; James Poole Jn.; Robert Phippen; Charles James Thomas and William Naish Esqs. be the first and present members of the said Docks Committee.

Resolved that five of the members of the said committee shall form a Quorum.

Resolved that the attention of the Dock committee be particularly directed to the consideration of the following points viz.

As to the reduction of Rates on Vessels and Goods respectively required and authorized by the Act to be made within three months after the Transfer of the Docks . . .

As to the amount which it will be requisite to borrow under the authority of the Act for defraying the costs charges and expences of and incidental to the obtaining and passing of the same for the necessary repair maintenance and support of the Docks or for any other of the expenses of carrying the Act into execution and as to the course to be taken for borrowing the same.

Resolved unanimously that Richard Poole King Esq. be elected Chairman of this Committee.

Resolved that this Committee do meet weekly at this office on Monday at One o'clock for the transaction of General business without summons.

<sup>1</sup> For biographical details of members of the Committee see W.G. Neale, *At the port of Bristol*, vol. 1.

<sup>2</sup> The reports of this Committee are to be found in *Proceedings of the Council*, vol. 6, this particular report being at ff 109–112.

<sup>3</sup> 11 & 12 Vict., cap. 43.

<sup>4</sup> The Deed is preserved in *BRO* (101032).

<sup>5</sup> He was a partner in Osborne, Ward and Co., solicitors and also Clerk to the Merchant Venturers and to the Dean and Chapter. His family had been solicitors for the past three generations. He died in 1854 of T.B. when homeward bound from the West Indies (*Bristol Mirror* 10 June 1854).

#### **4 September 1848**

Resolved unanimously that George Thomas Esq. be elected Deputy Chairman of this Committee.

Resolved that the account of the Bristol Docks be continued with

the Banking House of Messrs. Miles Harford Battersby and Miles . . .<sup>1</sup>

Resolved also that this Committee will without delay use its best exertions to raise under the powers of the Bristol Dock Act authorizing the Corporation to take up on loan sufficient moneys to repay such advances as may in the meantime be made by the Bankers on Account of the Bristol Docks and that such advances shall be repaid out of the first moneys so borrowed.

Resolved that the Town Clerk, Mr. Daniel Burges<sup>2</sup> and Mr. Robert Osborne be joint Clerks and Solicitors of this Committee . . .

<sup>1</sup> For its history see C.H. Cave, *A history of banking in Bristol* (privately printed, Bristol 1899) pp. 78ff.

<sup>2</sup> For his career see G. Bush, *Bristol and its municipal government* (Bristol Record Society, vol. xxix 1976) p. 138.

### 11 September 1848

Ordered that a Sub Committee of Finance be appointed.<sup>1</sup> Ordered that a Sub Committee of Works be appointed to be called The Sub Committee of Harbour and Works.<sup>2</sup>

Ordered that a Sub Committee be appointed to consider the subject of Bye Laws and Regulations for the regulation of the Harbour and works.<sup>3</sup>

The Clerks were authorized to treat with the Exchequer Bill Loan Commissioners for an immediate loan of £20,000 on the principle of repayment at the end of seven or ten years if practicable.

<sup>1</sup> It consisted of R.P. King, G. Thomas, W. Tothill, J.W. Miles, J. Vining, R. Robinson. W. Naish and J. Gibbs.

<sup>2</sup> Its members were R.P. King, G. Thomas, James Poole Jun., F. Jarman, W. Goldney, R. Robinson and C.J. Thomas.

<sup>3</sup> The members were R.P. King, G. Thomas, R. Phippen, James Poole Jun., H. Visger, G.E. Sanders and F. Jarman.

### 18 September 1848

The Clerks reported that they had communicated with the Secretary of the Exchequer Bill Loan Commissioners as to a Loan to the Corporation from that body and had ascertained that there was no certainty of their being able to advance any money until July 1849 . . .

### 25th September 1848

The Works and Harbour Sub Committee submit the following recommendation to the Committee viz.

That the Superintendent<sup>1</sup> be directed to keep a requirement book in which he shall enter all articles necessary for the use of the works. Also an expenditure Book in which he shall enter all materials with their contents weight or quantity (as the case may be), particularizing

where and when such materials are used.

That such Books be sent to this Office every Monday morning previously to the meeting of the Committee.

That the receipt and expenditure of such materials be entered in a Stock Book in the form of a debit and credit Account such book to be kept in this office under the supervision of the Secretary.

That no work be entered upon by the Superintendent (except in cases of sudden emergency) without an Order in writing from the General Committee through the Secretary.

That in all cases as aforesaid such proposed work shall first be inspected by the Sub Committee of works and reported upon by them previously to their being sanctioned by the General Committee.

That the undertaking of Works of sudden emergency be forthwith reported to the Secretary for the purposes of the attention of the Sub Committee of works being directed to.

That the weekly labour account be made out under the head of the several works in progress and that a distinct account be kept of the ordinary and extraordinary Repairs. [Adopted]

A letter from Mr. J.H. Miles was read . . . stating he was led to believe that the Corporation might obtain a loan of sufficient money for their present purposes from Insurance Offices and tendering his assistance . . .

Ordered that Mr. Miles be authorised to negotiate for the immediate loan of £15,000 at interest not exceeding five per cent per annum and upon the terms of the same being repayable on six months notice from either party.

<sup>1</sup> This was Joseph Dand Green who had held this post with the Bristol Dock Company since 1843 and had established himself, though not in name, as Docks Engineer. For his work for the company see R.A. Buchanan, *Nineteenth century engineers in the port of Bristol* (Bristol Historical Association 1971) p. 11.

## 9 October 1848

The Clerks submitted a letter from the Solicitors to the Exchequer Loan Commissioners suggesting the expediency of an immediate application to that body by the Corporation should they wish to borrow money during the course of the next year the applications to them for loans from other quarters being very numerous.

Ordered that the Clerks do make an application for the sum of £30,000.

It is Resolved that it is highly important with a view to give full effect to the alterations about to be made in the Dock dues and at the same time to afford the utmost encouragement to a revival of the Trade of the Port that every practicable reduction in other Port charges should be made simultaneously with that of the Dock dues and that a communication therefore be made to the Society of Merchant Venturers expressing the earnest hope of this Committee that they may be enabled to co-operate with the Corporation in

effecting this object by a reduction of the Wharfage dues concurrently with that of the Dock dues.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the *Proceedings of the Council* vol. 6 31 October 1848 but not in the Docks Committee Minutes, it is reported that the Society will 'discontinue wharfage dues on Irish Goods (imported) and goods exported to Ireland and will not levy more than 6d per ton on general imports'. The Council thanked the Society for its 'liberality'. Wharfage dues were an important source of income for the Society. The Corporation had granted a lease of these to the Society for 99 years in 1764.

**28 October 1848**

### **Report of the Docks Committee to the Council**

The provisions of the Act of Parliament . . . having been founded on the Report on the Transfer of the Docks presented to the Town Council on the 13th October 1847 your committee have carefully reviewed the Calculations contained in such Report and the reductions of Dues therein recommended.

The latter having been based upon the data afforded by the Trade of the Port for the year ending 30th April 1847 and a large increase in the Income of the Docks having taken place between that period and the previous time your Committee have the satisfaction of stating as a result of their consideration that reductions contemplated by that Report may be realized to the full extent.

They accordingly recommend that the 3/- and 2/- Tonnage Rates be reduced to 1/- the 1/- Tonnage Rates to 6d. and 6d. Tonnage Rates to 4d.

Your Committee having also reviewed the Rates upon Goods recommend to the Council an alteration therein according to the Schedule appended to this Report. An alteration which whilst it involves a loss of Income not exceeding £65 per annum calculated on the Imports of the Year ending 30 April 1848 reduces the number of items of charge upon Goods contained in the Collectors printed list from 630 to about 100.<sup>1</sup>

The Committee need hardly remark upon the expediency of such an alteration. They regard it as one of the most important advantages attained by the Transfer of the Docks enabling the Council as it does at once and with scarcely any loss of income to make the Port free of Dock charges in respect of the great majority of the articles of Import of this Kingdom and many of them being amongst those most highly rated thereby affording the greatest encouragement to the Importation into Bristol of Articles which for the most part form no portion whatever of the present Trade and the prospect at the same time of improved Revenue to the Docks from Tonnage Rates upon the Vessels in which such Goods may be imported.

Your committee recommend that the above alterations be made to take effect on the 1st day of November next.

Upon the subject of the Borough Rate provided by the Act of Parliament in consideration of the reductions of Dues it will appear by the Justices Certificate . . . that the amount raiseable by a four penny rate for the present year has been fixed at £7,129 4s 8d . . .

In regard to the amount chargeable upon the Borough fund under the provisions of the Dock Act for the year ending 30th April 1849 and therefore necessary to be raised by a Rate upon the Borough your Committee estimate the same at the sum of £5,650. This being a less amount than that certified by the Justices it is proper that your Committee should explain for the information of the Council that the sum certified is the gross amount of four pence in the Pound on the present rateable value of the property in the Borough and that therefore deduction must be made to cover deficiencies and cost of collection and also that it is provided by the Act that the sum Ordered by the Council shall be apportioned amongst the several districts and parishes of the Borough according to the Survey of 1837 and the rateable value of the property in the several districts having between the date of that survey and the present time increased in different proportions an apportionment on the basis of the Survey of the full sum appointed by the Justices with an allowance for the necessary deduction above alluded to would necessarily throw upon those parts of the city in which the least increase has occurred a rate exceeding four pence in the pound which your committee apprehend would be at variance with the understanding subsisting between the Corporation and the City it is therefore recommended by your Committee that the Council shall order a Rate for the sum of £5,650 which being apportioned in the same manner as the Borough Rate would with the addition of a sufficient sum to cover the cost of collection and deficiencies in no case exceed four pence in the pound upon any assessment throughout the City. Your Committee would observe that when the new Survey of the City recently ordered shall come into force which will be in the year 1850 the apportionment will be according to the actual rateable value of the property in the respective districts whereby the produce of a four penny rate will probably be increased at the least £600 per annum.

With reference to the necessity of borrowing money for the purposes of the Act to which the attention of your committee was also directed by the last meeting of the Council your committee estimate the sum of £30,000 to be the utmost that will be required by the end of the year 1849 and they recommend that they may be authorized to raise that amount.

Your Committee recommend . . . the appointment of the following Officers viz.

Mr. Edward Hinton . . . Secretary

Mr. Tidenham Green<sup>2</sup> . . . Dock Master

Mr. Joseph Dand Green . . . Superintendent of Works

Mr. Joseph Horsley Steddar<sup>3</sup> . . . Collector of Rates and Dues on Goods and Shipping

. . . that they shall have the same Salaries and Enrolments as have heretofore attached to their respective offices.

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings of the Council* vol. 6 31 October 1848 gives a list of 101 'goods, wares and merchandise', 'to continue subject to Dock dues'. Many of the items freed of

charge in 1848 would be subjected to charge again in 1856. For the three classes of tonnage rates established by section 74 of the 1803 Act see W.G. Neale, *op. cit.* p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> He had been Dock Master for the Bristol Dock Company since 1843.

<sup>3</sup> *Bristol Mirror* 9 May 1863 for a brief notice of his death.

#### 4 December 1848

“Mr Burges reported that at the suggestion of Mr Thomas he had placed himself in communication with Messrs. Overend and Gurney of London and treated with those Gentlemen for a loan of £20,000 at 5 per cent per annum for eight months on Bond of the Corporation and he now submitted a letter from those Gentlemen offering such loan. (Accepted).

Ordered that Mr. Burges be authorized to furnish the same and ascertain upon what terms they may be willing to advance a sum not exceeding £20,000 for a term of years!<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It was reported in the *Minutes* 18 December 1848 that £20,000 from Overend and Co. had reached the Committee's bankers.

#### 18 December 1848

*Clerks report on the jurisdiction and duties of the several Port Officers (Calendared)*

The Water Bailiff, Quay Warden, Dock Master and Haven Master should all be appointed Harbour Masters and Dock Masters with legal jurisdiction over the whole Harbour and Docks in order to comply with existing legislation. But the ordinary exercise of their duties will be confined as follows: the Water Bailiff for the part of the Harbour and Docks between the Stone Bridge on the river Frome and Crane no. 16 on the Grove and the Redcliffe Dam. His duties are to regulate the entrances, mooring and exits of vessels and where they should discharge cargo or passengers. He is also to regulate the removal of unserviceable vessels, the quantity of ballast which discharging vessels should have in their holds, settle disputes between vessels running into each other, keep the Quays clear of obstruction and attend every opening of the Draw Bridge and at Princes Street Bridge when water is to be let off. The Quay Warden's duties will be confined to the part of the Harbour and Docks between Crane no. 16 on the Grove and Hanham Mills excluding management of the Feeder and Totterdown Locks. The Dock Master's duties will be confined to the Basins and the Feeder and Totterdown Locks and the Haven Master's duties will be confined to the tidal river Avon from Netham Dam to its mouth. All three officers have duties analogous to those of the Water Bailiff.

#### 23 December 1848

Ordered that it be recommended to the Town Council that for the future the Salaries of each of such officers [i.e. Water Bailiff and

Quay Warden] be fixed at £200 per annum.

**15 January 1849**

Treasury Chambers,  
11 January 1849

Sir,

. . . My Lords are pleased to approve of the Corporation of Bristol raising a sum of money not exceeding Thirty thousand pounds for the purposes stated in your letter of the 5th ultimo and more fully detailed in your letter of the 30th ultimo such sum to be secured by Bond.

(signed) C.E. Trevelyan.

The Clerks . . . reported . . . they had communicated the result to Messrs. Overend and Gurney and informed them that the Draft Bond would be prepared and sent for their perusal forthwith.

**12 March 1849**

Ordered that the sum of £10,000 making together with the sum of £20,000 advanced by Messrs. Overend, Gurney & Co. the full amount authorized by the Town Council on the — day of — to be borrowed on the Bonds of the Corporation be taken up at not exceeding  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent interest and for a period not exceeding 7 years.

Mr. Osborne having stated that he could procure the sum of £4,000 to be paid at once and £6,000 on the 1st May upon the above terms.

Ordered that such offers be accepted.

**26 March 1849**

Mr. Brunel attended and submitted his plans of the Timber platform for the recess of the new Lock the cost of which excluding fixing he estimated at about £2,000 . . . [Adopted]

**2 April 1849**

Mr. Osborne reported that in pursuance of the desire of the Committee expressed on the 19th March he had negotiated for a loan of £20,000 to the Corporation to pay off Messrs. Overend Gurney & Co. at the expiration of the period for which their loan had been advanced upon the terms of the same being lent for a period of 7 years with Interest at the rate of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent per annum – and was now in a position to state that he could obtain the same.

**7 April 1849**

Ordered [that the City Seal be affixed] to a Bond dated 14th December 1848 from the said Mayor Aldermen and Burgesses to David Barclay Chapman Esq. for payment of the sum of £20,000 with

Interest at the rate of £5 per cent per annum on the 14th day of August 1850<sup>1</sup> advanced by him under the provisions of the Bristol Dock Act 1848.

<sup>1</sup> 1849 is pencilled in instead of 1850.

### **11 April 1849**

The Committee met at the new Lock Cumberland Basin at two o'clock for the purpose of inspecting the working of the outer Gate at low water, the wheel of the gate having been cleaned and greased. The Gate was opened in 30 minutes and shut again in 26 minutes. 9 men working at the Grabs without great exertion.

### **23 April 1849**

A letter was read from Mr. Brunel stating that he estimated the amount due to Rennie & Co. on account of their Contract for the new Lock at the sum of £4,500 . . .

Ordered that the Secretary be instructed to write to him expressing the surprise and disappointment of the Committee at the amount of his estimate they not being aware of any extra work which could come to so large a sum . . .<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For the wrangle over whether the building contractor, Rennie and Co., was entitled to additional payments for sums incurred as a result of verbal instructions from Brunel's deceased Chief Assistant, J.W. Hammond, see R.A. Buchanan, Brunel in Bristol, in P. McGrath and J. Cannon, *Essays in Bristol and Gloucestershire History*, pp. 232-5.

### **4 May 1849**

Copy of Council resolution

"That in the opinion of this Council it is highly desirable that the port of Bristol be made a Government Station for the purposes of Emigration . . .

### **16 July 1849**

J.G. Shaw, Esq., Governor of the Corporation of the Poor<sup>1</sup> attended the Committee to solicit their sanction . . . in the adoption of measures for effectually scouring the River [Frome] above the Stone Bridge in consequence of the prevalence of Cholera in its neighbourhood.

Copy of Letter from Colonial Office.

Downing St.

10 July 1849.

. . . Lord Grey<sup>2</sup> does not doubt the spirited exertions which have



been made by the Corporation of Bristol for the improvement of their Harbour but that much the largest portion of the Emigrants who quit this Kingdom proceed by means of their own resources, and select that Port of departure which may appear to them most convenient, so that as far as they are concerned, Her Majesty's Government has no power of interference and that, with respect to the small number of emigrants whom the Government assist to emigrate by means of Funds supplied from the Australian Colonies, Plymouth is found to be the Port which on the whole affords the greatest number of facilities for carrying on the service in the most economical and efficient manner and that Her Majesty's Government therefore cannot with a due and impartial regard of the Public and the welfare of the Emigrants appoint a different Station.

[signed B. Haines]

<sup>1</sup> J.G. Shaw (1805-1875), councillor 1842-1863; mayor 1854 and 1855; merchant and soap manufacturer. For the Corporation of the Poor see E.E. Butcher, *Bristol Corporation of the Poor 1696-1834* (BRS vol. iii). It survived the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834.

<sup>2</sup> 3rd Earl Grey (1802-1894) Whig. Colonial Secretary 1846-1852.

## **27 August 1849**

The Clerks reported that the Tolls of the Gates at Princes St. and at the overfall Dam opposite Redcliff had been put up [to auction] at the sum of £852 per annum and let to Mr. Samuel Loxton, the former lessee at that sum for a term of three years . . .

They also reported that the Tolls of the Totterdown Gate had been put up at the sum of £656 per annum and taken by Mr. Samuel Loxton for a like term of three years . . .

The Clerks reported that the Bond of the Corporation to David Barclay Chapman Esq. for £20,000 had been assigned on the (blank) inst. to William Miles, Philip William Skinner Miles, and John William Miles Esqrs. on their advancing the amount . . .

## **29 October 1849**

The Dock Master reported that the Bridge across the new Lock, Cumberland Basin, had been handed over to him as complete and fit for use.

## **17 December 1849**

Ordered that the Superintendent of Works be requested to send to this office every Monday morning before 12 o'clock a written report on all the Works in progress and the manner in which the Drag and Dredge Boats have been employed during the preceeding week and that such Report do also embrace any other business he may wish to call the attention of the Committee to. Ordered that the Harbour

Masters be also directed to make their Reports to the Committee in writing.

### 31 December 1849

A letter from Mr. McCulloch . . . requesting to be furnished with the recent alterations in the Port Charges of Bristol in order that they might be accurately represented in the forthcoming edition.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J.R. McCulloch was the major classical economist of his time and a leading statistician. No doubt his inquiry was in furtherance of the new edition of his *Commercial Dictionary* which appeared in 1849 for which see D.P. O'Brien, *J.R. McCulloch, a study in classical economics*, (1970) p. 89 note 3.

### 18 February 1850

A letter from the Town Clerk was read announcing the appointment by the Council at the said quarterly meeting of Mr. R.P. King as a Member of this Committee.

Ordered Mr. R.P. King be and he is hereby elected Chairman of this Committee.

### 25 February 1850

The Secretary produced the Draft of Answers prepared by him to the inquiries of the Admiralty as directed by the Committee on the 4th inst.

Q.	A.
1. Floating Docks or Basin	Floating Harbour with two Entrance Basins from the Tidal River.
2. Area	About 70 acres.
3. Extent of quayage in the yards.	About two thousand yards of quayage and admitting of further extension if required.
4. Number of vessels supposed to be accommodated.	About two hundred and fifty vessels could be accommodated with berths to load or discharge cargoes at same time.
5. Depth of water in dock.	Twenty five to fifteen feet in the harbour.
6. Depth over sill at high water.	Thirty to thirty four feet spring tides.
7. Depth over sill at low water or height of sill above low water at spring tides.	Cumberland Entrance Basin: Seven inches over the sills of large lock. Fourteen inches . . . small lock. Bathurst Entrance Basin: Sills of lock nine inches above low water at spring tides.
8. Width of Entrance: if by lock its length, breadth and lift.	<i>Cumberland Basin</i> Large lock. Width of Entrance 54 ft. With an arrangement by which at ordinary springs a vessel may pass through with paddles of an extreme width of 65 to 67 ft.

	Length from sill to sill	260 ft.
	Small lock. Width of entrance	45 ft.
	Length from sill to sill	190 ft.
	<i>Bathurst Basin</i>	
	Width of entrance	35 ft. 8 ins.
	Length from sill to sill	152 ft.
9.	Closed by Gates or caissons and of Timber or iron.	Cumberland Basin: Two iron caisson gates for large lock. Two pair of timber gates for small lock. Bathurst Basin lock: Two pair of timber gates.
10.	Angle of entrance with direction of flood or ebb stream.	Forty seven degrees at Cumberland Basin. Fifty three degrees at Bathurst Basin.
11.	No. of Cranes	Nineteen cranes.
12.	Does it open into a Tidal Basin or direct into the stream.	Two Tidal Basins. Cumberland Basin at Rownham for vessels of the largest class. Bathurst Basin near Bedminster Bridge for vessels under 500 tons.
	[pencilled thro']	
13.	Revenue from Dues etc.	Revenue £32,064 17s. 11d. in the first year with the large Reduction of Dues which took effect on and from 1st November 1848 viz.
	[Pencilled corrections]	
	£21,679 4 11	Dues £22,218 3 6
	9,000	Borough Rates 8,000
	1,385 13 0	Tolls, Licences, Rents 2,081 16 6
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	32,064 17 11	32,064 17 11
14.	Date of beginning of works	1st May 1804.
15.	Date of opening Docks	28 April 1809.
16.	Name of Engineer	Mr. William Jessop and Mr. Josias Jessop. Sir Thomas E. Blackwell.
17.	Name of resident engineer	Present Resident Engineer.
18.	Whole cost of construction	Five hundred and ninety two thousand pounds.
19.	Present debt, if any.	Four hundred and fifty five thousand pounds.
Additional Information	The Harbour contains Eight Dry Docks capable of Docking at the same time 13 Vessels of 500 tons and upwards. The Docks and Quays belong to the Corporation of Bristol. In addition to the Public there are many private Wharves. The Warehouses whether bonded or otherwise are private property they are not enclosed, a great part are on the Quays and they are easy of access.	

**8 April 1850**

The Clerks were directed to prepare the draft of a report to the Town Council on the subject of the necessity of obtaining a further loan of £20,000 on account of extraordinary repairs.

**15 April 1850**

Mr. Osborne having stated that he was prepared on behalf of friends

to advance to the Corporation £10,000 at 4% for seven years.

. . . Ordered . . . such Tender be accepted.

## 22 April 1850

Ordered that the Watch Committee be informed that this Committee is of opinion that the establishment of a Water police would be very desirable . . .<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Watch Committee had been memorialized by merchants and shipowners complaining of the depredations to ships and goods on the quays and had asked the Docks Committee for its view. The Watch Committee refused 'to recommend any increase in the expense of the Police Force of this City by providing a water police' (*Watch Committee Proceedings* 17 April, 1, 8 May 1850).

## 29 July 1850

Resolved that although there appears to be a surplus of ordinary Income amounting to upwards of £1,600 applicable to a further reduction of dues yet with the experience of one years working only of the measure this Committee think it would not be prudent to recommend the Council to make any reduction during the present year.

## 19 August 1850

### Report of Bristol Dock Committee to Council

. . . on comparing this second year's working with that of the first although it will be found from the statements of tonnage and other statistics accompanying the annual account that the tonnage of timber has fallen off to the extent of 12,521 tons and of corn to the extent of 730 yet from the increase in other branches of general trade the revenue has not been diminished to the amount which might have been expected.

By the nearest calculations the Committee can make the Revenue for the year ending 30th April 1849 would at the old Rates have amounted to £34,734 6s. 10d. and for the year ending 30th April 1850, at the same Rates of £33,592 15s. 3d. being a deficiency of only £1,141 11s. 7d. as compared with the Revenue of the preceding extraordinary year.

The Committee would now advert to the Special report adopted by the Council on the 13th October 1847 and to the calculations therein contained on which the purchase of the Docks was founded and comparing the last year receipts from Shipping and Goods at the reduced rates with those of 1847 at the old rates your committee cannot but think that the result will be considered satisfactory.

In that Report it was calculated that the deficiency which would arise from the reductions of Tonnage Rates therein recommended and afterwards adopted, would amount to £9,400. To this sum Parliament, by the abolition of the dues on Irish goods, added £600, making to total estimated deficiency £10,000.

The Committee, however, have the satisfaction to shew by the subjoined Statement that the actual deficiency instead of amounting to £10,000 has not exceeded £7,790 19s. 3d., thus being £2,209 0s. 9d. less than the amount calculated upon.

Revenue from Shipping and Goods for the year 1847	£28,222	2s.	10d.
Reductions	10,000		
	18,784	2s.	10d.
Revenue from Shipping and Goods for year 1850	20,993	3s.	7d.
thus giving	£2,209	0s.	9d.
less than the deficiency calculated upon in the Report of 1847.			
. . . In that Report the cost of Ordinary Annual expences and management was estimated at	£8,900		
and interest on Capital expended for extraordinary repairs	£2,550		
making a total of	£11,450		
In the first year the actual expenditure for ordinary repairs and management amounted to	£10,902	11s.	1d.
And interest to	668	12s.	2d.
	£11,571	3s.	3d.
In the second year ordinary repairs and management	£9,891	0s.	8d.
Interest	1,260	1s.	8d.
	£11,151	2s.	4d.

The Committee would observe that until extraordinary repairs or what may properly be called the Capital Account be closed the Ordinary Repairs must necessarily be somewhat arbitrary. The Committee however have used their best endeavours to keep them distinct and have every expectation that in future years the cost of ordinary repairs may be diminished.

In reference to Extraordinary Repairs and expences for which the sum of £70,000 has been provided by the Act and of which sum the Council has authorized £50,000 to be raised the total sum expended between the date of the transfer and the 30th April 1850 has amounted to £41,526 17s. 1d. viz. in the last year £17,462 15s. 8d. and in the preceding year £24,064 1s. 5d.

To this expenditure the Committee have applied the sum of £30,000 first authorised to be raised by the Council and also the surplus ordinary revenue of the Docks up to the date of the accounts now rendered to the extent of £11,354 7s. 3d. which has been temporarily appropriated to this purpose with the view of saving Interest on borrowed capital by postponing to the latest period the raising of the residue of the £50,000.

They have since the 30th April borrowed at Interest at £4 per cent £10,000 part of the residue for the purpose of replacing so much of the money so appropriated from the Ordinary Revenues.

The Committee trust that they shall not have occasion for some time to apply to the Council for further authority to raise money on loan.

The Council will on reference to the Annual Account observe that the Ordinary Income of the Docks for the past year at the reduced rates amounted to £32,646 14s. 3d. and the Ordinary Expenditure to £30,988 11s. 1d. thus leaving a surplus . . . applicable to a further reduction of dues amounting to £1,658 3s. 2d.

The Committee however do not think it prudent after one years experience only of the working of the measure to recommend the Council to make any reduction during the present year.

### **3 March 1851**

The Superintendent reported that a Sewer was in course of construction for the purpose of taking the Sewage of a large portion of the block of Houses lying between the White Ladies Road and Gallows Acre Lane and conveying the same into one of the Sewers belonging to the Paving Commissioners now discharging into the FLoat. [Discharge not allowed]

### **5 May 1851**

The Superintendent having reported that there were four oak trees at Stapleton belonging to the Duke of Beaufort which were suitable for the gates of the Northern Entrance Lock, Cumberland Basin, was authorized to purchase the same . . .

### **14 July 1851**

On consideration of the Accounts for the year ending 30 April 1851 . . . it appears that there is a surplus of ordinary income over ordinary expenditure for the year amounting to £3,222 5s. 5d.

Ordered that it be recommended to the Council to reduce the dues on sugar one half or to  $\frac{1}{8}$  per ton and to take off the dues on tea coffee and cocoa altogether such alterations to take place on and from the 1st of November next.

Ordered also that in consideration of the increased amount which the four penny Rate will for the future yield under the new Survey it be recommended to the Council to discontinue the Tolls at the Totterdown and Overfall Gates on foot passengers and on oxen cows and other meat cattle, sheep, lambs and swine from 30 April 1852.

### **4 August 1851    Report of the Bristol Docks Committee to the Council**

The results shewn by these Accounts are highly favorable both as regards the working of the measure (i.e. 1848 Act) and the progress of the Trade of the Port . . . [which] has exceeded by a considerable

amount not only that of the preceding year but also that of the extraordinary and exceptional year of 1849, the excess (in Foreign Trade) over the latter year amounting to 10,234 tons and over the year 1850 of 17,778 tons.

The increase of the Revenue of 1851 over that of 1850 is £1,671 17s. 5d. . . . this improvement of the Trade of the Port . . . is not confined to one or two branches neither is it due to special or particular causes which would give it an exceptional character . . . [it] may be fairly referred to the general improvement of Trade experienced throughout the Country.

. . . The Annual Accounts show the Ordinary Income for the past year to have been £34,372 0s. 8d. and the Ordinary Expenditure £31,050 15s. 3d., leaving a *prima facie* surplus . . . of £3,222 5s. 5d. however a portion of this surplus amounting to £522 16s. 1d. consists of arrears on the years interest on Notes not claimed by the day up to which the accounts are made out, but, for the most part since paid, the [surplus] should therefore be taken as . . . £1,699 9s. 4d.

The Committee now feel it to be their duty to advise the Council . . . that the dues on sugar should be reduced from 3/- per ton to 1/6d. per ton and that the dues on coffee, cocoa and tea should be taken off entirely . . . on and from 1st November next.

The dues on sugar during the past year amounted at 3/- per ton to £4,467 11s. 8d. which at 1/6d. per ton will give £2,233 15s. 10d.

The dues on tea amounted to	£81	15s.	6d.
on coffee and cocoa to	£31	12s.	3d.
making a total reduction of dues			
to the extent of	£2,347	3s.	7d.
as against the surplus of	£2,699	9s.	4d.

It will be seen by the Accounts that the sum disbursed in Extraordinary Expenditure during the past year amounts to £7,067 10s. 10d. making together with £41,526 17s. 1d. expended during the two previous years the aggregate . . . of £48,594 7s. 11d.

## 20 October 1851

A letter from Mr. D. J. Green Superintendent of works was read tendering his resignation.

Resolved unanimously that [it] be accepted the committee dispensing with his services from this day and paying him an addition to his salary due on the 31st of this month, a sum equal to half a year salary.

Ordered that the Dock Master be instructed to discharge all Foremen, Workmen and others employed on the works under the Superintendent on Wed. next giving to such as may not re-engage a weeks pay in lieu of a weeks notice.

Bristol 20 October 1851

Gentlemen,

From the course which has lately been pursued by the Committee in respect to my duties the instructing Mr. Blackwell' to make plans for carrying out certain portions of works commenced under my

directions render it too apparent to me that I cannot in the present state of things carry on the duties of my situation . . . I have therefore tho' reluctantly after 8 years arduous duties under The Old Dock Company and the present Committee come to the determination of respectfully resigning my situation as Superintendent and resident Engineer . . .

[from Joseph D. Green]

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Evans Blackwell (1819-1863) M.I.C.E. (1849), engineer of the Kennet and Avon Canal Co., Vice-President and General Manager of the grand trunk railway 1857-1862 (F. Boase, *Modern English Biography*).

### 1 December 1851

A letter dated this day addressed to the Committee by Mr. Richard Hughes Master of the Ship *Effingham* of Cork with a Cargo of Guano was read stating that the vessel was lying at Kingroad, that she drew 20 ft. 6 in. and could not be brought up the River Avon from want of water until Saturday next and that as it was intended to let off the water from the lower part of the Harbour on that day, the Ship would be thereby detained three weeks and therefore requesting that the water may remain in the float for a few weeks longer — and the request having been considered, Mr. Hughes and Mr. Whitwill,<sup>1</sup> his Agent (who were in attendance) were informed that the application could not be acceded to but that every effort should be made to restore the water on Friday the 12th Inst.

<sup>1</sup> Shipowner and shipbroker. For biographical details of the family see W.G. Neale, *op cit* pp 192-3.



## **Docks Committee Minute Book Vol. 2**

### **5 January 1852–7 November 1854**

**12 January 1852**

Mr. Thomas Evans Blackwell appointed Engineer of the Docks works.

Regulations.

That the Engineer shall during his continuance in office reside in Bristol.

That his salary shall be £300 per annum and an additional allowance of £100 per annum in lieu and as an equivalent for all extra charges for drawings and plans.

That he shall have the responsibility of attending to and superintending the whole of the Works including the repairs thereof – the scouring and cleaning the Floating Harbour – the superintendence and repairs of the Locks, Basins; Feeder Canal, Culverts and Banks – the management of the Steam Drag and dredging and Hopper Boats the Caisoon and all apparatus and machinery used for the purposes of scouring and cleansing the Harbour; and the reconstruction of Dock Gates, Bridges and other parts of the Works as occasion may require, but, as regards the regulating the height of the Water in the Floating Harbour, as well as scouring the Basins and Harbour, the Engineer must at all times attend to the requirements of the Dock Master.

That he must submit a Report upon the state of the Works either personally or in writing to the Committee once every fortnight.

That he shall be authorized to appoint a Foreman to act under his orders and to be subject to his control at wages of £12 10s. per calendar month to include House Rent and Taxes.

The Committee is to provide a Clerk to be under the control of the Engineer . . . whose principal duties shall be to act as Storekeeper — to keep a daily account of all persons employed in and about the Works — to prepare a weekly pay sheet . . . to prepare and send to the Dock Office every Saturday a statement of the requirements for stores and materials — to keep a daily account of the receipt and delivery of stores and materials . . .

**5 July 1852**

#### **Report of the Docks Committee to the Council**

The Committee have to express their regret that the Account as to Revenue does not present as favorable result as that of the year 1851 (the most productive since the Transfer). On comparison of the two years the deficit in the last year on Tonnage Rates and Rates on goods will be found to amount to £1,669 18s. 1d. Explanations, however, may be adduced . . . the Council must be reminded . . . that a considerable reduction in dues payable upon several leading Articles of consumption [was made] whereby it was calculated that the Dock Revenue would sustain a loss of about £2,300. Other causes also have contributed . . . and particularly an unexpected diminution

in the import of sugar during the last six months as compared with a similar period in 1851 the quantity being less by 5142 tons and the consequent loss of Revenue upon the present reduced scale of dues £750. This however may be accounted for by reference to the Returns published by the Board of Trade demonstrating a general falling off in the Import of Foreign Raw Sugar . . . in all ports of the United Kingdom . . . This Statement in the Returns . . . applies to . . . Foreign as contradistinguished from Colonial sugar and the Committee have great pleasure in communicating to the Council that the falling off in the Bristol Imports is applicable to general Importations and has not prejudicially affected those of West India sugar (a staple trade of the port) which have exceeded those of former years by 700 tons and it may therefore be fairly anticipated as improvements occur in the general Imports of the Article in other parts of the Kingdom this port will participate in such improvements . . .

In the imports of Grain there has also been a deficiency . . . arising from the great scarcity and demand in the northern ports of Europe and particularly in Germany and a favourable harvest in this country and there has been some falling off in the importation . . . of timber heretofore required for railways.

The deficiency of the present year has arisen principally from adventitious circumstances . . . not at all . . . likely again to interfere with the reasonable anticipations of a gradual improvement in the trade of the port.

Extraordinary Expenditure . . . it will be seen that £8,252 17s. 8d. have been disbursed . . . during the past year making with £48,594 7s. 11d. paid in the three preceding years an aggregate of £56,847 5s. 11d. which has been met by the loans of £60,000 raised with the sanction of the Council in part of the £70,000 authorized by the Act to be borrowed for those purposes — of the latter amount £20,000 has been raised during the past year and £10,000 of it at the low rate of interest of  $3\frac{3}{4}$  per cent.

*Ordinary Income* . . . has amounted to £32,552 7s. 5d. and the expenditure for ordinaries £32,690 12s. 3d. That amount has been increased by three items which are not likely . . . again to occur in the Ordinary Expenditure. The first is for payments made for arrears of interest due 30th April 1850 £1,059 9s. 5d. The second the cost of strengthening the Inner Gates of the Junction Lock at Cumberland Basin £658 3s. 5d. and the third for four Hopper boats necessarily provided to aid in scouring and cleansing the harbour at a cost of £1,875 2s. 0d. together £3,592 14s. 10d. making the whole outlay £36,283 7s. 1d.

### **Sheds and Australian Trade**

With reference to the probability of a considerable increase in the Export trade from the establishment of a regular line of packets to sail from hence to Australia . . . it appears . . . essentially necessary . . . that some additional shed accommodation should be supplied.

**20 September 1852 Copies of Council resolutions of 14 September 1852**

That the Docks Committee be authorized by this Council to carry out the improvements at the Round Point and this Council engages to find the Funds for the purpose with the confident expectation that the Society of Merchants will give their liberal assistance.

That so much of the said Report [i.e. of the Docks Committee] as refers to the erection of new Sheds be postponed for future consideration.

Tenders for removal of the obstructions in the River Avon near the Round Point.

Henry Blandford and Henry Neale	£7,700	0	0
Thomas Egelstaff	7,434	12	4
William Baker	6,268	0	0
Thomas Dark	4,650	0	0
J and E Rigby	3,780	0	0

**8 November 1852**

"It appearing to the Committee that it is essentially necessary the sum of £10,000, the remaining part of the £70,000 authorized by the transfer Act to be raised for Dock purposes should be immediately provided to meet the outlay and outstanding liabilities in respect to the repairs and maintenance of the Docks.

Resolved that a Report from this Committee to the Council stating the necessity of the loan [be prepared].

**22 November 1852**

R.P. King to Thomas E. Blackwell, 16 Nov. 1852

I was yesterday appointed Chairman of the Docks Committee for another year and looking at the great expenditure which has taken place upon the Works during the last six months I can assure you it was with some reluctance that I again took upon myself this responsibility combined as it now is with the difficulty and unpleasantness (to all parties) of cutting down our expenditure to the lowest possible amount.

This must now be done whether we like it or not. We are come to an end much sooner than I expected of the £70,000 we were authorized to borrow under our Act of Parliament and we have therefore nothing now to rely upon for expenditure in repairs and the payment of our rent and interest but our Revenue and the 4d rate which must not be exceeded under any circumstances.

Every person therefore in your department that is not absolutely necessary must now be discharged.

I should feel the more delicacy about discharging a number of hands at this season of the year did I not remember that many of them have frequently been receiving from 10 to 15 days wages for one weeks work I have therefore the less hesitation about it.

It has always been objected to by our Committee that such overtime should so frequently have been allowed and I should before

have spoken to you more seriously about it but whilst we had in hand two critical works both of which we were anxious should be finished at the earliest period I delayed doing so.

On the 13 September last you gave us your opinion on our future annual expenditure say £5,300 which we hope with you will afford an ample margin for any contingencies. Were it not for the many exceptions this sum would be about the mark. It is as near as possible the sum for which the Dock works were kept in repair for 10 years previous to the purchase by the Corporation; it is true that they were not kept in that state of efficiency in which they are at present but on the other hand during the last ten years nearly £70,000 have been expended in extraordinary repairs and for many years afterwards that ought certainly much to lessen the ordinary expenditure.

Thomas Blackwell to R.P. King 18 November 1852

I must beg to assure you that you will be good enough to consider me as well disposed to carry out reductions whenever possible.

At the same time I should act with as little regard for your interests as my own character if I led you into the belief that (beyond the ordinary maintaining of the Float and its contingent works together with an ordinary account of contingencies which could be estimated for) it would be possible to estimate the larger contingencies which the age and condition of the Works, the recurrence of the accidents such for instance as those dependent on the character of the works themselves including even the effect of heavy and unusual floods which the Works seen unable to resist.

To attempt to reduce these into a fixed and certain annual sum without a large previous expenditure or a large margin provided for annually cannot I am sure be expected and yet how much of past and present expenditure is of this character. No one can possibly be more disappointed than I have been after taking to the duties of the Office at which time also I am sure that neither yourself nor Mr. Thomas could have foreseen to what an extent in repairs the works at Netham Dam and the North Lock would extend . . .

**10 January 1853**

The Weekly wages to be paid to the Lockmen at Cumberland Basin . . . the Foreman to be paid in future 25/- per week and the Lockmen to be appointed to fill up the vacancy in the number of Lockmen 15/- per week.

**8 August 1853**

**Report of the Docks Committee to the Council**  
(with account to 30 April 1853).

"It is satisfactory to the Committee to state that although the importations of a few articles of merchandise have not equalled those of former years, yet that the General Trade of the Port, from Foreign parts, in the past year, has been productive of an increase of upwards

of 16,000 tons as compared with the preceding year.

The Ordinary Income of the year amounts to £32,064 17s. 11d. against £32,552 7s. 5d. last year and this notwithstanding the loss from the reduction of Dues upon Sugar, Coffee Tea and Cocoa and upon Tolls amounting together to £2,302 7s. 11d. — of this increase the sum of £986 5s. 7d. is derived from the additional receipts from the Borough Rate consequent upon the new Survey against which must be deducted £802 7s. 11d. from the entire abolition of Tolls upon passengers and cattle.

The Ordinary Expenditure has been £32,647 11s. 9d. which includes £728 18s. 1d. for additional interest on money borrowed under the provisions of the Act. It will be seen that the outlay for Extraordinaries has been very considerable including therein the repairs of the North Lock — Netham Dam, strengthening the Caisson, securing the banks of the New River and carrying into effect the important measure of the Establishment of new Landing Stages near Bathurst Basin by which great accommodation has been afforded for Shipping Goods and passengers. In addition to those expenditures the Committee have finally settled the long pending claim of Messrs. Rennie and Co. in respect to Brunel's Lock by payment of £6,000 — the claim was for a much larger amount and was reduced to the sum stated after considerable discussion and negotiation. It is satisfactory to the Committee to inform the Council that the works generally may be considered to be now in a good state of repair. With reference however to the crowded state of the Port and the difficulty now constantly experienced of providing Berths equal to the requirements of the Shipping the Committee most anxiously desire to direct the attention of the Council to the subject being decidedly and unanimously of opinion that to fully realize the benefits anticipated from the transfer of the Docks it will be absolutely necessary that additional Quay Room suitable to the accommodation of the increasing trade of the Port should be provided and in consideration of this truly important subject, the Committee would submit to the Council the following observations.

## **22 August 1853**

A letter dated 20th Instant, addressed to The Committee by the Bristol Chamber of Commerce representing the great necessity which exists for some plan being forthwith adopted by which facility may be afforded for the conveyance of goods from the quays and wharves of the port to the several Railway Termini was read and referred to the Engineer.

## **24 December 1853      Report of the Pilotage Committee (Calendared)**

The Committee considered the contention of the Gloucester and Berkeley Canal Co. that the present compulsory pilotage was oppressive because the great majority of vessels required no pilotage between Lundy Island and the Flat Holmes. The Company claimed

that the port of Gloucester was subject to a double pilotage rate and great delay at Kingroad from the change of pilots there. Exemption of all vessels from compulsory pilotage between Lundy and Flat Holmes and the extension of the Gloucester pilotage district from Kingroad to within sight of Flat Holmes for all vessels bound to or from Gloucester was to be sought.

The Committee regards this as detrimental to Bristol's interest and that of other Bristol Channel ports. If this concession was made to Gloucester there would be no ground for opposing similar concessions to other ports. The Committee recognise the increased importance of several of these ports but believes it is essential to maintain an efficient body of experienced pilots with knowledge of the whole Bristol Channel, subject to a central authority with the right to impose compulsory pilotage. The Committee reject the view that most vessels do not need pilotage westward of the Flat Holmes. It believes that the mercantile community regards compulsory pilotage as beneficial and that pilotage rates bear no comparison to the insurance rates that would be charged if compulsory pilotage was removed. It recommends resisting any change in the present arrangements and maintains that the pilotage has been built up by Bristol into a very extensive and efficient service with a disciplined staff consisting of 50 pilots, 80 men, 40 apprentices and 40 skiffs averaging 30 tons.

#### **6 February 1854**

Messrs. Whitwill and Rowe attended the meeting in relation to accommodation being afforded to two lines of Steam-Screw ships intended to trade between this port and Liverpool and Glasgow, and their desire that adequate quay and shed accommodation should be provided for goods to be shipped and landed from such vessels and offering to contribute any reasonable amount towards the accomplishment of the latter measure, and after a long discussion upon the subject, the committee informed the applicants of their anxious wish to give every attention and facility towards the advancement of the trade of the port, and expressed their regret that there were no funds at the disposal of the committee which can be applied to the proposed accommodation. Still that the committee would be ready to promote any feasible plan for effecting it.

#### **31 July 1854**

#### **Report of the Docks Committee to the Council**

The Committee however desire to call the attention of the council to that part of the statistics which demonstrates that the foreign tonnage for the year ending the 30th April amounted to 186,000 tons against 148,454 in the proceeding year showing an increase of 38,246 tons or nearly 26% on the largest years trade up to that period and to the additional fact that the Irish and coasting trade have also increased. The income of the present as compared with that of the past year arising from tonnage rates and rates on boats has considerably

advanced that of 1853 having been £20,266 15s. 2d. and that of 1854 £24,416 5s. 7d. these are facts compared with the results of former years evincing undeniably that the trade of the port has greatly improved and leading to a reasonable expectation that it may continue to improve unless indeed the effects of war should interfere with and prejudicially affect the general welfare and commerce of the country.

The committee would further add that the ordinary income of year amounted to £34,887 17s. 10d. although arrears of the borough rates of 1853 to the amount of £958 8s. 0d. were still outstanding. The ordinary expenditure amounted to £35,390 10s. 11d. which includes the large sum of £3,971 8s. 3d. devoted to the necessary repairs of the river banks, walls, bridges and culverts leaving the sum of £1,570 2s. 10d. only for the ordinary repairs of works from Netham Dam to Cumberland Basin.

The expenditure of cleansing the Harbour throughout the year has been considerable, still the outlay has proved most satisfactory as having affected the removal of an immense mass of many thousands of tons of mud and rubbish thereby affording an increased depth of water at the quays and especially above the drawbridge supplying berths in that situation for vessels which herebefore occupied some of the best berths at the Broad Quay and the committee have the satisfaction to assert that the Floating Harbour is generally in a far better state as regard depths of water and the consequent facility afforded to the navigation vessels than it has been for many years.

The committee have to express their sincere regret that the continued outlay for repairs very far exceeding the amount originally contemplated but absolutely required for the maintenance and upholding of the works and keeping them in working and safe condition has prevented for the present any proposition of the further reduction of the dues.

The melancholy event of the death of Mr. Robert Osborne and the desire expressed by Mr. Burgess to retire from the office of clerk to this committee rendering it necessary that a new arrangement should be made.

Resolved that this committee recommend to the Town Council that the duties of the said office be henceforth performed by the law officers of the Corporation and that the sum of £105 per annum be paid to those gentlemen as a compensation for their attendance on the meetings of the committee and the performance of the additional legal and other business thereby imposed on them . . .

**The question of the pilotage of the Bristol Channel** (Calendared)  
A deputation from the Docks Committee and the Merchant Venturers waited on Mr. Cardwell, President of the Board of Trade, to seek government's views on the Swansea Harbour bill which proposes to transfer some of Bristol's pilotage powers to Swansea. Mr Cardwell's opinion was that this would not be in the interests of other channel

ports and that government would probably produce a general measure to settle the whole question.

The Docks Committee thought it right to oppose the Swansea bill by obtaining the insertion of a clause saying that the relevant powers should not come into operation until the consent of the Board of Trade had been obtained. The result of the subsequent inquiry held before Captain Beechey are public knowledge.<sup>1</sup> Since then the Committee has been pleased to learn that Mr Cardwell appreciates the effective management of the present system and bases his view that a comprehensive plan is needed not on any failure of it but on the emergence of many different and conflicting interests in the Channel.

<sup>1</sup> Captain F.W. Beechey (1796-1856) served on Sir John Franklin's Spitzbergen expedition, helped survey the coasts of West Africa and Ireland, Superintendent of the Marine Dept. of the Board of Trade 1850-1856 (F. Boase, *Modern English Biography*).



## Docks Committee Minute Book Vol. 3 18 November 1854–16 August 1858

4 April 1855

### Report of Docks Committee to the Council

Your committee regret they are called upon to report to the Council the total destruction of the Iron Bridge across the new course of the River Avon, called Bath Bridge or Hills Bridge which took place on the 20th March last.<sup>1</sup> Your Committee caused an immediate investigation of the circumstances occasioning the fall of the Bridge and after hearing many witnesses find that there is no doubt that it was caused by the Steam Barge "*John*" running with great force against the Iron Girders on the north or Bristol side of the bridge and that the collision was entirely owing to the unskilful and negligent manner in which the Barge was navigated.

Whilst your Committee lament to state that there is little doubt the lives of two persons passing over the Bridge at the time were lost, there is much cause for thankfulness, considering the usually crowded state of the thoroughfare that many more lives were not sacrificed. Your Committee have instructed the Law Officers to take such legal measures as they shall be advised against the Owners of the Barge for the damages occasioned by the negligence of his servants.

The attention of your Committee was immediately directed to the measures necessary to afford temporary relief to some portions of the very large traffic interrupted by this unfortunate occurrence. They therefore directed their Engineer to prepare a plan, and obtain an estimate for erecting a temporary foot bridge, in the immediate vicinity of the bridge destroyed. They regret to report that such accommodation can not be afforded at a sum less than £600. As your Engineer has reported that the proposed new bridge hereafter referred to, may if approved by the council, be erected in the space of six months, and as within 7 weeks from the commencement of the permanent work, accommodation over it for foot passengers can be established, your committee did not feel justified in recommending the outlay of so large a sum for the temporary and partial relief of the Traffic. They have however caused a ferry to be established near the Bridge, which though your committee are well aware affords very insufficient accommodation yet an average of 800 to 1,000 people have daily availed themselves of it.

Before your committee proceed to direct the attention of the council to the report of the Engineer, and his recommendation as to the structure which shall permanently occupy the site of the late bridge, they think it right to state, that the expenses of such erections, subject of course to such mitigation as the amount to be recovered from the owner of the barge for the damage done to the late Bridge may afford, must be born by the Borough Fund.

It now remains for your committee to direct the attention of the council to the Report of the Engineer on the new Bridge, and they

recommend that the plan of a wrought iron girder bridge on the larger scale referred to in such report should be adopted. If the council confirm this recommendation it will be necessary that your committee should be empowered to take the necessary steps for carrying the same into effect and with references to the convenience of the public and the large traffic at present so seriously interrupted, the committee trust that no delay may take place in the completion of the permanent structure.

<sup>1</sup> For a description of the incident see *Bristol Mirror* 24 March 1855: *Terrible Catastrophe: total destruction of the iron bridge at Temple Gate*. The bridge was a single arch of 160ft made by the Colebrookdale Iron Works Co. The barge was employed in bringing coke from Cardiff to Bristol for the use of the Bristol and Exeter Railway Co.

### 13 August, 1855      The Report of the Docks Committee to the Council

. . . The Committee had the gratification when submitting to the Council the annual accounts of 1854 to point out the great increase in the Trade of the Port . . . and but for the depression of Trade occasioned by the War with Russia and the failure of the crop of grain in the United States and other corn producing countries the Committee had every reason to hope that this prosperous state of things would have continued.

It will be seen on reference to the Statistics which accompany the Accounts that there has been a decrease in the Tonnage from foreign ports of 38,732 tons as compared with 1854, arising almost entirely from the falling off of the Imports of grain and timber from the north of Europe and North America without taking into account that the supply of tallow and hemp were 3521 tons less than the preceding year. There is also a slight decrease in the Coastwise tonnage of 2091 tons.

The income of the present year . . . as compared with 1854 shows a decrease of £2,694 10s. 9d. . . . a falling off of about 11 1/6 per cent on the Revenue of the best year since the Transfer, but Bristol does not stand alone in its diminution of trade, every port in the United Kingdom has been more or less affected by the war and the failure of the grain crops abroad and it may be observed that the decrease in Liverpool for the last year according to Official Returns amounts to 12 1/5 per cent.

The ordinary income of the year amounted to £33,214 1s. 9d. and the ordinary expenditure to £33,065 13s. 11d. in which latter amount there is a large outlay in the repairs of the Apron of Brunel's Lock and the new wall, and widening the road at Cumberland Basin which latter work has been a very great accommodation to the public. Besides the ordinary expenditure of the year the Committee have had to disburse £3824 15s. on the following works viz. the new Bridge Junction Lock, the Inner Caissoon Gate of Brunel's Lock and the Dock Master's new office Cumberland Basin and the new Wharf and widening the road at Totterdown.

**6 October 1855**

The Chairman reported that at an interview he had with Mr. Blackwell . . . on Monday last, Mr. Blackwell communicated to him that for some time past, the repairs and management of the Bristol Dock Works had not gone on to his satisfaction . . . (and that) he had not been able to exercise the control he wished over expenditure [which] was larger than it ought to be. That he found that the time and attention which it required to keep it down was more than he was able to devote to it . . . Mr. Blackwell . . . made the following propositions . . . that for the future his Assistant Mr. Howard should be the local engineer, devoting the whole of his time to the repairs and maintenance of the works the Committee only requiring Mr. Blackwell's attendance when any extraordinary work should occur. Mr. Blackwell stated that Mr. Howard . . . was a very good engineer<sup>1</sup> . . . [and] that he was willing to make a considerable sacrifice in his own salary of £500 a year which he now proposed should be thus apportioned £200 a year to himself as Consulting Engineer £300 a year to Mr. Howard as Local Engineer. That without wishing to cast any blame upon Mr. Hosking who was an exceedingly valuable man he found that . . . the responsibility of the expenditure should be more clearly identified with the person who has the immediate charge of it.

*Resolved* . . . with the present state of the finances requiring the most rigid economy this Committee cannot entertain . . . a salary to a Consulting Engineer but will be glad to avail themselves of Mr. Blackwell's services on all special occasions paying for such services when required . . . That Mr. Howard be appointed Resident Engineer . . . That the services of Mr. Hosking, the present Foreman be dispensed with . . .

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Howard was to serve as Docks Engineer from 1855-1882. R. A. Buchanan, *Nineteenth century Engineers in the Port of Bristol* p 13 describes him as the epitome of the new kind of Docks Engineer — a salaried official serving his employer faithfully and with businesslike competence.

**26 November 1855**

That it be an instruction by this Committee to the sub-Committee on Finance to supply the deficiency in Revenue by increasing the Rates payable on Tonnage as well as Goods.

A deputation from the General Steam Navigation Company and the Chamber of Commerce having waited on the committee presented the following resolutions (Calendared).

The Chamber of Commerce, the Merchant Venturers and the General Steam Navigation Company suggest that the needs of the port for sheds would be met by three sheds each 60ft by 30ft on Broad Quay and the same on Welsh Back and two 80ft square sheds between the two mud docks on the Grove. (Committee approves provided the sheds become public property and are located and constructed to its satisfaction).

**17 December 1855**

Report from the sub Committee on the Financial state of the Dock Estate . . . for the last two years during which it has been necessary to depend solely upon the Ordinary Income, the Revenue has not been equal to the Expenditure and unless some measures are promptly taken to materially diminish the Expenditure and also at the same time to increase the Revenue, the Dock Estate will very soon be involved in Financial difficulties.

Your Sub Committee confidently expect that in consequence of the arrangements recently made with Mr. Blackwell's late assistant Mr. Howard for devoting the whole of his time to the superintendence of the repairs of the Works, the Expences under this head will for some years to come be much reduced the Works being now in a better condition than they have been at any time since their construction.

Nevertheless with the heavy balance now due to the Bankers and with the falling off of some branches of our Trade consequent upon the continuance of the War and with a diminished amount of Tonnage Dues occasioned by the late Act for the measurement of Shipping your Sub Committee cannot hope to see the Finances restored to a healthy state without also increasing the Revenue.

They therefore recommend that the Rate on Sugar which was reduced in 1851 from 3/- to 1/6 per ton be increased to 2/- per ton and that all those articles from Foreign Parts which have been allowed to be imported free of Dock Dues shall for the future be charged agreeably to the annexed Schedule . . .

They also recommend that the Tonnage Rates on all Vessels from Foreign parts now paying 1/- per ton be increased to 1/2d. per ton and on all Vessels now paying 6d. per Ton be increased to 7d.. per Ton and on all Vessels from Ireland and Coastwise except from Cardiff, Newport and other ports to the eastward of the Holmes now paying 4d. per Ton be increased to 5d. per Ton.

Your Sub Committee recommend that these alterations should take place on and after the first of February next and they calculate that the Revenue will be thereby increased about £3,500 per annum and this combined with the anticipated diminished Expenditure will restore the Docks Finances to a healthy and satisfactory state.

And thereupon the Committee after making certain amendments therein Adopted it and ordered it to be presented to the Council at their meeting of the 1st January next.

Read a letter from Messrs. Haycroft and Pethick' . . .

29 Queen Square  
30 June 1856

Gentlemen,

We are sorry to have to intrude ourselves on your notice but the great loss we sustain and the inconvenience we suffer from the want of Sheds on the Quay compel us to bring the matter before you.

In Liverpool, London, Hull, Exeter and Plymouth we land Hides

and have the necessary accommodation afforded while in Bristol we pay very heavy dues and have no protection from Sun or Rain from the former we suffer great loss in weight, from the latter much hindrance in working and have frequently 20 to 30 men idle on a damp day and the ships detained longer than necessary some coming on demurrage others with protests and complaints of delay from Captains and Owners. We have just had five ships at once in port and it is impossible to work in showery weather . . .

As to Exports, to speak within the limits of our own experience when we first commenced our business here two obstacles existed one is now removed viz. the break of guage at Gloucester the other was that there existed no sheds to protect goods arriving for shipment. There are 40 to 50 tons of Cotton Goods sent monthly hence to London and Liverpool for exportation to South America, we could take these goods, if we could get double the quantity from the North and we believe this could be done, as there are no export charges here and this would induce manufacturers to send goods here for shipment provided any convenience existed for receiving them.

The natural conveniences of Bristol are very good, there is plenty of room on our Quays and an outlay of £3000 to £4000 would do it efficiently and if this money was borrowed at 4% a very trifling charge on the Goods thus benefitting would pay the interest until the Dock Company could pay it off . . . [Committee regret it has not funds for erecting sheds].

Read a letter from Mr. Hartnell (Calendared) The Committee is informed that the Directors of the Bristol General Steam Navigation Co. had applied to the Merchant Venturers for permission to erect sheds on the Quay and to remove them if they so wished reserving to the Merchants the right to order the Co. to remove them. The Merchants gave permission subject to the approval of the Town Council, their lessor. The Co. seeks that approval which the Committee grants provided the sheds are not removed once erected and that the Co. does not claim exclusive use of them.

<sup>1</sup> Well known merchants.

#### **4 August 1856**

#### **Report of the Docks Committee to the Council**

In the last Annual report the Committee had occasion to advert to the falling off of the trade of the port arising as well from the war then existing with Russia, as from the failure of the crops of grain in nearly all the other corn producing countries, and although these causes have happily ceased to exist, yet the periods of such cessation before the 30th April last was too short to have any very material effect upon the accounts now presented.

The income of the year amounts to £32,900 1s. 4d. and the expenditure to £34,103 6s. 1d. and although in this latter amount there is a large outlay for strengthening the gates and the repairs of the entrance lock at Bathurst Basin and £1,035 3s. 3d for the repairs of the Walls and the banks of the River, yet it will be found on

reference to the accounts of former years that the charge for "repairs of works" is considerably less than it has been in any year since the Transfer of the docks, and it will be very satisfactory to the Council to be informed that the Engineer reports the Works to be in an efficient state. It will be observed on reference to the accompanying statistics that there was a decrease in the Tonnage of a few articles of import especially of Timber as well as sugar — yet such was the steady and progressive improvement in other branches of Trade toward the latter part of the Docks financial year, that the actual decrease in the revenue was only £576 15s. 5d.

## **2 February 1857**

Read a Memorial from the Agents of the Steamers trading between London and Bristol and Liverpool and Bristol . . .

We the undersigned . . . beg respectfully to call your attention to the charges imposed on the Foreign Goods brought to this Port Coastwise which charges are so heavy as in many cases to exclude the same from being so brought at all.

We would instance three shillings per pipe on Wine, two shillings per Ton on Tallow, two shillings and sixpence on Brandy, four shillings per Ton on Cotton, two shillings per Ton on Sugar and one shilling and sixpence per puncheon on Rum.

Your Board must be aware of the great competition of the Railways which contribute nothing to the Docks and to a considerable extent use the Waters of the Harbour by Barging Goods to and from their Stations.

Upon some of the Articles enumerated in your list the Docks Dues amount to nearly half the freight.

These Steamers are a great accommodation to the Trade and Public of this City and yield a considerable revenue to the Docks and we feel assured you will give them all the relief in your power. We would suggest that the Manifest of the Steamers being produced to your Receiver and a charge say one third of the present rate would yield the City a larger sum than at present and we also express our fear that if this be not adopted we shall have to take the Vessels off the Stations but we trust your Board will take a favourable view of our application . . .

John Edwards  
Richard Rowe  
Geo. H. Evans

Resolved . . . the Committee regret that application cannot be complied with.

## **20 July 1857      The Report of the Docks Committee to the Council**

Although the committee have to notice a falling off in the import of Sugar and a few other articles arising solely from adventitious circumstances, it affords them great satisfaction to state that the trade of the port shows a large increase in the Tonnage from Foreign parts

as compared with the years 1853 and 1854 and which will more readily appear on references to the accompanying statistics, and but for the loss sustained by the new system of admeasurement of Vessels the Tonnage from Foreign parts in the present year would have exceeded that of any previous year.

The income of the year amounts to £39,206 7s. 5d. whilst the total expenditure amounts to only £32,560 15s. 2d. arising from the most rigid system of economy pursued by the committee with the view to bringing the Finances of the Dock Estate into a more sound and healthy state and this most desirable object they now have the satisfaction to state has been fully attained as at the close of the Docks financial year, they had sufficient funds in hand to meet the half year's interest on promissory notes payable 1st May 1857 and all other outstanding claims.

### **21 July 1857**

Read a letter from Mr Whitwell, Chamber of Commerce, Bristol 23 July 1857 asking the Committee to receive a deputation from the Chamber to explain why it thought it appropriate to press Bristol's claim to be a departure port for Government Emigrants.

The deputation attended and the Committee appointed two of its members, W. Naish and C. Nash, to join with the Chamber's deputation to the Colonial Secretary (Calendared).

### **15 February 1858**

The Mayor attended the Committee and stated that he had been waited on by a Deputation from the Chamber of Commerce on the subject of providing Dock accommodation at the mouth of the River and he suggested that a sub Committee from this body should be appointed to confer with Deputations from other Public Bodies upon this important subject.

It was Resolved,

That Mr. King Alderman Robinson, Alderman Beloe, Alderman Ford and Mr. Charles Nash be a sub Committee to accompany the Mayor at any meeting of the Deputations referred to.

### **21 June 1858**

Read a copy of the Report from the sub-Committees of the Town Council, the Society of Merchants and this Committee with the extract from the Proceedings of the Meeting of the joint Committees passed on the 11th inst. and thereupon.

It was Resolved,

That this Committee are not at present in possession of any sufficient information to justify them in offering an opinion upon the merits of either of the schemes that have been considered by the sub-Committees with respect to the proposed extension of Dock Accommodation at the mouth of the River.

**2 August 1858****Report of the Docks Committee to the Council**

Notwithstanding the great depression of Trade throughout the country in consequence of the financial crisis in the autumn of the past year, the Committee have the satisfaction to report an increase in the trade of the port. The Tonnage from Foreign parts being 198,172 tons against 183,342 in the preceding year and the revenue arising from Tonnage rates and rates on goods being £29,105 2s. 9d. against £27,535 18s. 6d. in 1857. The total income of the year is £46,682 1s. 9d. and the Expenditure £31,952 13s. 5d. and in this latter amount there is an outlay of £1,278 18s. 10d. in repairs of the banks and in the removal of obstructions in the river.

Besides the increase of Shipping from Foreign parts, the coasting trade by Steamers of a larger class has very much augmented the last few years, and so much so, that the Harbour Masters have had great difficulty in finding suitable berths for the loading and unloading their cargoes, and as the Finances of the Dock Estate are now in a more satisfactory state the committee after mature deliberation and with the view of affording increased accommodation to the shipping frequenting the port have determined upon building a wharf at Mardyke of ample dimensions for the largest class of steamers trading to this port, and they are happy to report that such wharf is fast progressing towards completion. Whilst carrying the work into execution the committee regret to state that Messrs. Hill and Sons, shipbuilders thinking that the wharf would interfere with their launching operations as also with the occupation of their Graving Dock, applied to the court of Chancery for an injunction to restrain the committee from further progress. The case was partially heard before Vice Chancellor Kindersley when terms of compromise were entered into and upon payment of a sum of money to Messrs. Hill it was agreed that the Bill in Chancery should be dismissed.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> According to J.C.G. Hill, *Shipshape and Bristol Fashion* (Liverpool n.d.) p 35 the Docks Committee agreed to widen their wharf by some 10ft rather than 40ft, to move any ships that would be in the way of launching arrangements at their expense and to pay Messrs. Hill £1000 in lieu of damages.



**Docks Committee Minute Book Vol. 4**  
**30 August 1858–27 April 1863.**

**23 August 1858**

It was Resolved,

That the Chairman, Deputy Chairman and Alderman Ford be a sub-Committee for the purpose of investigating the accounts for the Collector of Dock Dues . . .

**20 September 1858**

Ordered that the Clerks do report at the next meeting their opinion as to the property of giving notice to Mr. Stedders Sureties that there is a deficiency in his Accounts as Collector of the Dock Dues.

**18 September 1858**

That Mr. Howard be instructed to survey and report upon the best means of improving the River at the Round Point the removal . . . of the Point on the Somersetshire side of the River near the Powder House as well as any other obstructions existing in the River between Rownham and Kingroad.

**8 November 1858**

The Committee . . . took into consideration the necessity of erecting a Crane capable of lifting 30 tons . . .

**15 November 1858**

The Town Clerk reported that he had received from Messrs. Savery & Co. notices of intention to apply to Parliament in respect of the Kingroad (Severn Pier) Kingroad (Avon Pier) and the Bristol Kingroad Junction Railway.

**29 November 1858**

That the consideration of erecting a large crane of 30 tons be postponed . . . and that an estimate be obtained for erecting a new Crane to carry 5 tons on the site of No.1 Crane which is worn out.

That in the next Report to the Town Council the regret of this Committee be expressed that the surplus of Cranage Receipts has been absorbed in the Borough Fund instead of being carried to a separate account to be applicable to the erection of new and the repairs of the existing Cranes . . .

**13 December 1858**

Extract from the proceedings of the standing committee of the Society of Merchant Venturers at their meeting on the 10 December 1858.

Resolved, that inasmuch as the Wharfrage lease, was made between the Mayor, Burgesses and Commonalty of the City of Bristol and the Society of Merchant Venturers, this committee considers that a resolution of the town council authorizing a negotiation, is essential, before this Society can treat for the surrender of the lease.

### **3 January 1859      The Report of the Docks Committee to the Council**

Your Committee report that they have received frequent complaints of the want of Shed accommodation on the Public Quays and Wharves and feel that the provision hitherto made in this respect is altogether inadequate to the requirements of the Port but that a great difficulty in the way of supplying the defect arises from the fact of the Wharves being held by the Society of Merchant Venturers under a Lease which will not expire until September 1863 and that therefore whilst the Society could not be expected to make a large outlay on Property held on so short a term the Corporation would not be justified in spending the Public money on Property not in their possession. Your Committee determined therefore to appoint a Deputation to wait on the Standing Committee of the Society of Merchants to ascertain whether there was any probability of the Society of Merchants entering into a negotiation for the surrender of the remaining term of the lease. And in reply . . . the following extract . . . has been received.

Your Committee therefore recommend that a Resolution be adopted authorizing such negotiation.

### **10 January 1859**

Read a letter from Mr. G. E. Bevan

4 January 1859

You will doubtless have seen the report addressed by Mr. James Walker C.E. to the Secretary of the Joint Committee on the subject of the Piers for which the necessary Parliamentary notices appeared.

That report having proved unfavourable to both plans . . . it was resolved [by the Joint Committee] that a letter be written to Mr. Walker inquiring whether he would give a Report at an early date on the general question of improving the Port accommodation and if so what his charge would be.

. . . Mr. Walker in his reply states that the cost of such undertaking would depend much on what amount of already existing reliable information could be afforded him . . . the principal information required [being] a correct plan of the River and its entrance with soundings and sections of the present channel — borings of the strata for some depth under the Channel and tidal observations.

. . . as I understand that Mr. Brunel and Mr. Rendel have made surveys . . . my having reference to them might save much time, trouble and expence.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Joint Committee consisted of representatives of the Chamber of Commerce, the Merchant Venturers and the Docks Committee. It favoured creating an ocean

steamship station at the mouth of the Avon involving building piers out into the Severn. James Walker, an engineer often consulted by the Admiralty, reported adversely on the project. Nothing came of the notion of having him give advice on a practicable scheme for dock extension. Mr. Rendel, an eminent engineer but deceased by this time had been engaged by Mr. Patterson, the Bristol shipbuilder, as early as 1852 to prepare a scheme for an ocean steam dock at the mouth of the Avon (C. Wells, *op. cit.* pp 106ff and 125–6.).

### **31 January 1859**

Resolutions of the Standing Committee of the Society of Merchant Venturers, 26 January 1859.

That this Committee cannot with due regard to the existing arrangements recommend the Society to negotiate with the Town Council for a Surrender of the Wharfage Lease.

That the Committee are willing to consider any plans . . . by the Town Council for the extension of Shed accommodation . . . and will be prepared to recommend the Society to assist . . .

### **14 February 1859**

It appearing from Mr. Pike's Report<sup>1</sup> . . . that there is a defalcation in the Collectors accounts for the years ending 30th April, 1849, 1850, 1851, 1852, 1853, 1854, 1855, 1856 amounting to £792 10s. 5d. and Mr. Stedder [Collector] having desired to examine and test such report it is resolved that [he] be allowed to have possession of such books . . . upon condition that he pays 75 per cent on the amount of defalcations so shown . . . it being distinctly understood that the acceptance of such payment is in no way to invalidate the claim of the Dock Committee for the full amount . . .

<sup>1</sup> J.T. Pike was a public accountant For the details of his investigation see his letter in *Minutes* 7 February 1859.

### **11 July 1859**

Read a long Report from Mr. Howard<sup>1</sup> (accompanied with plans) on proposed increased Dock accommodation . . . Resolved.

That Mr. Howard's Report being of so important a character and referring to a subject, in which many of the Citizens take so deep an interest . . . the Committee consider it desirable that it be laid before the Council . . .

<sup>1</sup> A portion of this report proposing dockising of the Avon is printed in C. Wells, *op. cit.* pp 129–135; the full report is to be found in *BRO Engineer's Reports*, vol. for 1 January 1857–31 March 1862 ff 122–153.

### **25 July 1859**

#### **Report of the Docks Committee to the Council.**

. . . Notwithstanding the falling off in the supplies of Hide, Palm oil, wine and a few other articles, the committee are enabled to report that there has been a steady increase in the trade of the Port during the past year, the Tonnage from Foreign parts being 202,998 tons

against 198,172 tons in 1858 and the revenue arising from Tonnage Rates and Rates on Goods being £30,819 19s. 11d. against £29,105 2s. 9d.

The total Receipts of the year amounted to £43,433 3s. 2d. which included the sum of £625 13s. 9d. received of the collector of rates on account of arrears of Rates on Goods and £239 16s. 9d. for Interest allowed by the bankers.

The total expenditure amounts to £50,091 5s. 5d. comprising the following items.

Cost of new wharf at Mardyke	£5,676	9s.	10d.
" " Cumberland Landing Stage	£1,755	14s.	11d.
Bond of the corporation due the 27th April 1859 discharged.	£10,000	0s.	0d.
Ordinary Expenditure of the year	£32,654	0s.	8d.

The wharf at Mardyke affords great accommodation to steamers and other vessels frequenting the Port and particularly so whenever there is a large influx of Shipping from Foreign parts.

The Cumberland Landing Stage is also found very useful to the steamers going to and from the Bathurst Basin.

The Holders of the Bond of the Corporation for £10,000 having declined to renew it and as your committee apprehend great difficulty in obtaining the sanction of the Treasury for its renewal, with such a large balance in hand, the committee considered that they should best consult the interest of the Dock Estate by paying it off and thereby save a large amount of interest annually.

The ordinary expenditure of the year includes £1,319 6s. 10d. for repairs of Banks, removing obstructions in the river and £650 for cost of a new hopper boat.

It will no doubt be in the recollection of the Council that by the 11th and 12th Vic.C43 Sec 60 the promissary notes of the Bristol Docks Company amounting to £256,399 3s. 11d. will be payable after the 1 May 1860 on giving six months notice to the holders and the Committee are of opinion that timely measures should be adopted so as to afford the note holders an opportunity to negotiate with your Committee for their renewal.

Your Committee having been empowered by the Council to ascertain whether the Society of Merchant Venturers would be prepared to surrender the remaining terms of the Wharfrage Lease, and if so upon what conditions, and to report thereon, beg to state that having intrusted the negotiation to a sub Committee they have received from them the following report.

(Calendared) The sub-committee considering the transfer of the wharfrage lease report that the Standing Committee of the Merchant Venturers do not recommend the Merchants to negotiate a surrender of the lease but will co-operate in extending shed accommodation. The sub-committee regret this decision which has apparently been reached without reference to the general body of the Merchants. It welcomes their disposition to co-operate in providing sheds.

Your Committee report that on the 18 October 1858 it instructed

their Engineers to survey and report on the best means of improving the River at the Round Point, the removal by dredging or otherwise of the points on the Somersetshire side of the river, near the Powder houses, as well as any other obstructions existing in the river between Rownham and Kingroad, and they have now to present to the Council Mr. Howards report on that subject. They have also received from Mr. Howard a very elaborate report<sup>1</sup> accompanied with plans for affording increased Dock accommodation, which without offering any opinion upon the desirability or practicability of the scheme, they desire to submit it to the serious consideration of the council.

<sup>1</sup> This was known as *Mr Howard's Further Report* and it together with a lengthy report by Joseph Green was read at a meeting of the Council on 27 September 1859 and ordered to be printed. There is a copy in Bristol Reference Library. Howard's report contained elaborate surveys and sections of the river designed to show the best method of deepening the bed of the river at Cumberland Basin to about 10ft below its existing level and continuing this until the Avon joined the Severn. Green's report was hostile both to dockizing the river or forming docks at the rivermouth. He advocated making a tidal harbour at the mouth of the Avon and improving the river access to the Floating Harbour.

### **26 September 1859 The Report of the Docks Committee to the Council**

Certain memorials from Captains of Steamers and others praying that a Landing Stage may be erected at the mouth of the River Avon for the accommodation of Passengers arriving late on Tide . . . your Committee . . . have directed the Docks Engineer to prepare a Report on the best and most economical manner of effecting the same which is now submitted to the consideration of the Council.

### **3 October 1859**

That the Engineer be directed to take immediate steps for the making of the new landing stage at the mouth of the Avon.

### **14 November 1859**

That James Poole be appointed Chairman.

That this Committee cannot meet for the first time . . . without expressing their deep regret at the great loss they have sustained by the retirement of Mr. King, their late respected Chairman.

### **16 January 1860**

Read a letter from Mr. John Cook Hooper,<sup>1</sup> Shirehampton 14 January 1860.

It is my intention to dispose of the Dunball Island containing twenty acres of grassland . . . there is a Gentleman in treaty for it, but being desirous that the Corporation should become the owners as any improvement at the entrance of the River would make it of great value to them, I respectfully offer the same for one thousand pounds which is much less than I have asked the party I am in communication with . . . (Clerks authorized to purchase).

<sup>1</sup> He was a publican who had bought the island two or three years earlier for £100. The Docks Committee paid £856 for it. (C. Wells, *op. cit.* p 139).

## 12 March 1860

At a meeting of The Standing Committee of the Society of Merchant Venturers [on 9 March 1860].

It was Resolved

That without committing the Society to an expression of opinion or approving the plans for Sheds now proposed, this Committee are prepared to recommend the Society to contribute an Annual Sum of £500 during their tenure of the Wharfage Lease in its integrity provided that satisfactory arrangements are made for avoiding any question of the Termination of the Lease between the Society and the Town Council in respect to any liabilities of the Society under the covenants of that Lease and provided also that the ultimate amount to be thus contributed by the Society shall not exceed 50% upon the actual outlay to be incurred by the Town Council in the erection of Sheds.

Mr. Thomas moved

That in the present improved state of the finances of the Bristol Docks it is desirable to revise the Dues . . . [Carried by a majority].

## 7 April 1860

[The Finance sub-Committee] declined to recommend the Council to relieve the Society of Merchants from their responsibilities under the covenants of the Wharfage Lease and thereupon

It was Resolved that in order to divest the question of difficulty, and at the same time to avoid any delay in the accomplishment of so necessary an object as the erection of Sheds, this Committee would respectfully request to the Society of Merchant Venturers the desirability of subscribing a sum unrestricted by any conditions . . .

## 7 May 1860

### Report of the Docks Committee to Council

Your Committee had hoped . . . to report . . . that the Society of Merchant Venturers had afforded very considerable pecuniary assistance towards this most desirable object [i.e. erecting Sheds], some questions however have arisen in relation to covenants under the Wharfage lease which have been referred to . . . the Finance Committee and which your Committee trust will receive very shortly a satisfactory solution and your Committee have deemed it advisable to delay their report on this pressing matter no longer and they recommend that they may be empowered by a moderate annual outlay gradually to carry into effect the Scheme for erection of Sheds . . .

## 6 August 1860

### Report of the Docks Committee to Council

Although there has been a falling off in the supplies of upwards of

20,000 Tons of Sugar, and a few other articles of general consumption, yet the Tonnage from Foreign parts still show an increase, of 3,725 Tons as compared with last year.

The receipts for Tonnage Rates and Rates on Goods during the year amount to £31,402 4s. 10d. against £30,819 19s. 11d. in 1859.

The total receipts for the year amount to £43,299 18s. 2d. against £43,433 3s. 2d. in 1859, but it should be borne in mind that in the last named year the sum of £625 13s. 9d. was received for arrears of Rates on Goods, and that a larger sum was then allowed for interest by the bankers, the balance in their hands being so much larger than in the present year.

The total payments of the year amount to £41,559 6s. 5d. in which are comprised the following sums of extraordinary expenditure amounting in the aggregate to £8,753 2s. 9d. viz. £376 paid for the junction lock bridges Cumberland Basin £313 13s. 1d. for the new cattle slip outside of Cumberland Basin — £707 13s. on account of the new landing slip and waiting room now in the course of construction at the mouth of the River Avon — £855 16s. 8d. for the purchase of the Dunball Island and £6,500 Bonds of the Corporation discharged.

The new cattle slip outside Cumberland Basin has been found exceedingly useful, and so has the new slip at the mouth of the river, even in its present unfinished state, but the Engineer is making satisfactory progress with the waiting room, which will afford still greater accommodation to the public.

The committee have much pleasure in reporting to the Council, that they succeeded in raising the whole amount required to pay off the £256,399 3s. 11d. of promissory notes of the late Bristol Docks Company at 4% per annum (at comparatively trifling sacrifice of interest viz. £270) and they have issued Bonds of the Corporation with coupons attached for the amount of this debt for the following terms of year.

£145,799 for 7 years; £67,700 for 10 years; £19,700 for 14 years; £23,200 for 21 years; total £256,399.

By this well timed operation a saving of upwards of £2,500 per annum in interest has been effected.

## **27 August 1860**

Read a letter from Captain Hardy R.N.

The Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty being anxious to place Her Majesty's ship *Trincomalee*, or some other vessel of War of somewhat similar dimensions . . . in one of the Floating Docks or Basins at Bristol as a permanent rendezvous for training the Royal Naval Volunteers of the Reserve Force of Seamen I am commanded<sup>1</sup> . . . to ascertain how far [the Committee] may be disposed to co-operate . . .

<sup>1</sup> The Committee agreed but vetoed the ship doing 'great gun' exercises with blank cartridges in the Harbour and proposed that percussion caps be substituted.

## Resolution of the Council

That a Committee be appointed to carry into effect the Resolution of the Council of the 1 October last in reference to the increase of Dock Accommodation with power to substitute the name of some other Engineer of eminence for that of Sir William Cubitt in the event of the latter declining to undertake the duty of advising the Council.<sup>1</sup> And that the Docks Committee be instructed to apply such sum of money not exceeding £2000 as may be required for the purpose and also to request the Engineer and other Officers of the Docks to afford all the information and assistance in their power to promote the objects of the Resolution . . . also Mr. Page's account amounting to £650 18s. 3d. for services rendered as Engineer in preparing Report and Plans for increased Dock Accommodation . . . to be paid.

<sup>1</sup> On 1 October 1859 J. G. Shaw and W. Herepath had moved and seconded a resolution in Council declaring it inexpedient to proceed either with rivermouth docks or dockization. An amendment to this resolution requiring the Council to seek the advice of Sir William Cubitt and Mr Thomas Page on the matter was carried by 37 votes to 15. Sir William declined to act and Mr John Hawkshaw was consulted in his place.

## 26 November 1860

The Town Clerk produced Mr. Hawkshaw's Account for his Report and Plans for increased Dock Accommodation amounting to £677 1s. 9d. which sum was ordered to be paid.<sup>1</sup>

That the sum of £250 be presented to Mr. Howard for the great trouble, labour and ability he has exerted with reference to the arrangement of the various Plans and Reports submitted to Messrs. Page and Hawkshaw.

<sup>1</sup> For Hawkshaw and Page's reports see *Reports of Mr Hawkshaw and Mr Page printed by order of the Committee appointed by the Council on the subject of Increased Dock Accommodation* (1860). There is a copy in the Bristol Reference Library. C. Wells, *op. cit.* pp 139–146 prints part of the reports. Both engineers cast serious doubts on the value of dockisation and recommended straightening, widening and deepening the Avon together with a dock at the mouth of the river.

## 16 February 1861

The Town Clerk read an extract from the report of the Finance Committee [of the Council] recommending that the Docks Committee be empowered to negotiate with the Merchant Venturers for the surrender of the Wharfage lease. (Calendared).

## 25 February 1861

The Town Clerk reported that the following Resolutions had been passed by the Council at their meeting held on the 18th Inst.

That the Docks Committee be requested to report to this House if it be practicable at once to give up the Fourpenny Rate levied for Dock purposes, as also the £2,400 levied on the Ancient Limits of the



City, provided the Town Council would, in lieu thereof, hand over to the Dock Revenues the Town Dues, Mayor's Dues, Water Bailiff's and Quay Warden's Fees, as also the Dues levied under the powers of the Wharfage Lease when that Lease shall fall into hand in September 1863.

That the Docks Committee be also requested to report in what way it would be most desirable to dispose of any surplus whether by putting the Docks into the most perfect state of repair, by improving the course of the River and giving more facilities and accommodation to our present traders, or by reducing the Dues on Goods and Shipping.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> These resolutions, rejecting by omission either dockisation or a rivermouth dock, had been moved by Richard Poole King, the ex-chairman of the Docks Committee. They reflected the views of the 'fixed property party' which had fared more successfully than their opponents in the municipal elections of November 1860.

#### **4 March 1861**

Merchants Hall, Bristol  
26th February 1861.

At a meeting of the Standing Committee of the Society of Merchants held this day

It was Resolved that subject to the approval of the Hall this Committee will treat for the Surrender of the Wharfage Lease on the following basis viz.

1st that the Surrender shall take place upon and after the 1st of July next.

2nd That the Town Council shall legally secure to the Society the payment during the unexpired period of the Lease . . . an amount per annum equal to one third of the total net receipt of the Society from the Wharfage Lease during the three years ending on the 31st March 1866 . . .

[there follows a list of items which shall be deducted from *gross* receipts to arrive at net receipts]

In offering the foregoing . . . the Committee desire to make the following observations.

1st The postponement of the transfer until the 30th June next will not be allowed to interfere with any plans for Shed accommodation which the Town Council may contemplate and in lieu of their Resolution of the 9th March 1860 in relation to this subject the Committee will recommend the Society to contribute as a free Gift the sum of £2,000 (being the amount previously promised conditionally) towards the erection of Shed accommodation on the Quays . . .

#### **11 March 1861**

The sub-committee . . . recommended the Committee to advise the Town Council to accept the terms offered by the Standing Committee of the Society of Merchant Venturers for the surrender of the Lease.

8 April 1861

Read a Letter addressed to the Mayor and referred by his Worship to the consideration of the Committee of which the following is a copy.

Cork Steam Navigation Company  
Cork

30 March 1861.

For more than 30 years this Company and its predecessor the St. George Steam Packet Company have employed Steamers between this Port and Bristol the size and Tonnage of which have at intervals been increased. The Registration of the *Sabrina* now on the Station being 404 tons or about double that of the original vessel. From this circumstance the navigation of the River Avon is found more difficult and considering the large amount annually paid for Port charges we feel justified in asking . . . [for] some measures of removing objectionable points and generally improving the course of the river. The charge on the *Sabrina* for Dock Dues is at th rate of £437 13s. 4d. per annum. Anchorage and moorage £100 10s. 8d. Quay Wardens fee £13 0s. 0d. Mayors dues £6 0s. 0d. being £97 10s. 0d. per annum for Dock Dues and £19 10s. 0d. for Anchorage and Moorage more than was paid upon her previous to being lenthened which we consider also gives us some claim for an outlay on the part of the City of Bristol to provide for the safe navigation of this class of steamer.

We are further induced to call your attention to this subject at the present time from having recently sent to your Port the *Preussischer Adler* engaged to remove a Field Battery of Artillery for which service a Steamer of large class only was fitted. She is 244 feet 7 inches long and 51 feet broad Registration half as large again as the *Sabrina* and as we may have occasion to send her or vessels of larger tonnage than *Sabrina* to your port again . . . we are also desirous to learn whether any and what improvements are likely to be carried out. In reference to the *Preussischer Adler* we have to state that we wished to have loaded her back to Cork on the 19th Inst. with 500 tons of coal but the tides being low it was not deemed prudent with the present impedments in your river to go down with so large a Cargo on board and therefore it was arranged for one half to be shipped in the Cumberland Basin and the other half from small craft in Kingroad which arrangement would in fine weather have been affected without difficulty but as the weather was bad this object was only attained in part.

The exposure of an open Roadstead is not suitable for this latter device and the Captain much regretted that there was no wharf within the shelter of the river's mouth where he could bay his vessel and this accommodation, in addition to the improvement of the River, we should be glad to see provided: for while it would meet such a casual demand as that now referred to (and we presume many such offer) it would also be of very great benefit to the regular trading Steamers and tend to assist ourselves and your own Local Steam Co. in preserving a trade to your port for which Milford is strongly contesting.

We are aware that a Slip has been constructed and been attended with some benefit but as it is available only by the aid of boats, we trust the construction of a suitable wharf for a Steamer to lay alongside of, and in case of need, to land and take in Passengers and Cattle, will be embraced in your contemplated improvements. Such we have had for many years at the lower part of our Rivers and which is now connected with this City by a Railway but it was not so when first in operation.

If such a wharf were erected it might in time be arranged to dispatch the vessels at regular hours (as now done at Milford) and so materially facilitate the communication between the South of Ireland and London. [from L. W. Glover, Secretary].<sup>1</sup>

The Secretary was directed to inform Mr. Glover that the Docks Committee will do all in their power to improve the navigation of the Port.

<sup>1</sup> For details of the iron paddleships *Sabrina* and *Preussischer Adler* (Prussian Eagle) and of the operation of the Bristol to Cork passenger service see G. Farr, *West Country Passenger Steamers* (Prescot, Lancs. 2nd ed. 1967) chap. 2.

## 15 April 1861

The sub-committee upon the revision of Tolls and Rates . . . recommend the subjoined reduction in the Schedule . . . and that Tonnage Rates on all Vessels from Foreign parts now paying 1/2d. per Ton be reduced to 1/- per Ton and on all Vessels paying 7d. per Ton be reduced to 6d. per Ton and on all Vessels from Ireland and Coastwise except from Cardiff, Newport and other Ports to the Eastward of the Holmes now paying 5d. per Ton be reduced to 4d. per Ton.

There is no Port charge on Goods exported from Bristol to any part of the World.

## 6 May 1861

### Report of the Docks Committee to the Council.

Your committee . . . beg leave to report as follows.

1st As to the best application of the surplus Revenues arising from the Dock Estate Your Committee feel that . . . they are bound to preserve the present Works in the most perfect state of repair and at all times to retain in their hands such a sum as will be available for any contingency or accident that may befall a property which from its nature is subject to risks, and that in order to afford facility and accommodation to the steadily increasing trade of the Port every improvement consistent with the necessities of modern commerce should be made in the present works.

Your Committee would willingly have carried their recommendation much further by applying part of the surplus to the development and straightening the River Avon . . . but from this most desirable work they are at present debarred by the Act of Parliament from which they, under the Council, derive their authority, under these circumstances they advise in compliance with the clause to that effect in the Dock Act 1848, there be made a reduction (which they have for

some time contemplated) in the Dues on Goods and Ships as set forth in the Schedule annexed, these reductions will amount to about the sum of £6,000 as calculated upon the receipts of last year.

Your committee feel that inasmuch as the arrangement alluded to could not be carried into effect without legislative enactment, they can at present go no further than to recommend that an application for Parliamentary powers should be made in the next Session to enable the Council to abolish the Fourpenny Dock Rate now levied on the whole Borough and which at present amounts to £6460 and that the Council should in lieu thereof hand over to the Dock Estate the Town Dues producing a nett amount of about £3570, the Mayor's Dues £1130, Quay Warden's and Water Bailiff's Fees £470 and the Cranage Rates £200 making a total of £5370 and the Committee would also recommend that in such proposed Act provision should be made for abolishing the Harbour Rate of £2,400 levied on the ancient City which is applied to the purposes of the Dock Estate and that the proceeds of the Wharfage rates should instead thereof form part of the Dock Fund after the 29 September 1863 when the existing arrangement with the Society of Merchants will have ceased. The Council will perceive that by this Plan the whole of the Rates and Dues arising from Shipping would become applicable to Shipping purposes only and that the foundation for any feeling of jealousy or impatience of taxation of the fixed property of the City in aid of any particular interest would be removed.

Your Committee recommend that in any Act to be obtained . . . powers should be given to enable the Council to apply a portion of any surplus arising out of the Dock Estate to the improvement of the approach to the Harbour of Bristol and to the supply of such appliances as the necessities of Commerce may from time to time demand and they also suggest that Ships using the Harbour beyond a specified time should be subject to a small Rate to be charged in respect of such overtime as is the practice in other Ports.

## **29 July 1861**

### **Report of the Docks Committee to Council**

The Committee have much pleasure in reporting to the Council a very satisfactory increase in the Trade of the Port, the Tonnage from Foreign parts during the year having been 260,861 tons, against 206,723 tons in 1860 an increase reaching to 54,138 tons to be attributed in a great measure to the larger import of grain flour which has amounted to 65,808 tons against 24,467 tons in 1860 showing an increase of 41,341 tons.

The total ordinary Receipts of the year are £47,961 7s. 1d. against £43,299 18s. 2d. in 1860.

The total payments of the year amount to £46,951 3s. 11d. in which are included the following items of extraordinary expenditure.

£1020 12s. 8d. for completing the loading slip and waiting rooms at the mouth of the river.

£10,000 0s. 0d. bonds of the Corporation paid off by which there

will be a saving of £450 per annum in interest.

£1,883 1s. 6d. Engineering Expenses and preparing Reports and plans for increased Dock accommodation including printing and publication of such plans.

The ordinary Repairs include a large outlay on the bank of the New Cut, and this must continue to be a heavy item of expenditure until the walling is completed.

In the present year the sum of £1,901 15s. 5d. has been expended for this object — and £668 9s. 11d. on account of the New Gates now in the course of construction for the north dock of Cumberland Basin, and about £400 for repairs of the mud boats — in regard to the ordinary expenditure for interest in Bonds it should be borne in mind that the Corporation have not yet reaped the full benefit of the conversion of the promissory notes into such Bonds, as a reference to the accounts will show; the last half years interest on the rates not having been paid after the 1 May 1860, so that when this judicious and well timed measure comes fully into operation there will be a further saving in interest, of about £1,280 per annum.

In forming any estimate of receipts for the future the Council will bear in mind that by its vote of the 14th May 1861, a reduction of Rates on Shipping and Goods amounting to £6,000 was effected — the Committee however indulge a hope that (notwithstanding this reduction) by an increase of Trade any ultimate loss to the receipts of the Dock Estate will be averted.

By a vote of the Council of the 25 June last, the duties in relations to the pilots hitherto performed by the Society of Merchant Venturers were transferred to the Dock Committee — your Committee cannot assume these duties without expressing their sense of the great obligation which the corporation is under to the Society for the very efficient and liberal manner in which they have discharged this responsible trust for the long period of 250 years.<sup>1</sup>

On the 8 May 1860 your committee presented to this house a report upon the subject of shed accommodation, in consequence of the pending negotiations with the Society of Merchant Venturers, for the surrender of the Wharfage lease, the further consideration of that report was postponed. As however the terms for the surrender of the Wharfage lease have been now satisfactorily arranged and the Society of Merchant Venturers have agreed to contribute the handsome sum of £2,000 towards the erection of shed accommodation, it appears to your committee that no further delay should take place in effecting an object which will afford increased facilities to the trade of the Port, and removes a cause of complaint which has been long (and as they cannot but feel) justly urged upon their attentions.

The committee therefore hope that the council will empower them at once to commence operations.

<sup>1</sup> The Treasurer of the Merchant Venturers was furious at the Council's decision over the pilots, writing that 'it had repaid the Society for all their good deeds by a Kick in the Bum'. The Society had managed the pilots since 1612 — 249 years — but it had seriously considered giving this up in 1840 (P.V. McGrath, *The Merchant Venturers of Bristol*, pp 316-18).

**14 October 1861**

Letter from L. Bruton, 52 Queen Square, Bristol 14 October 1860

The Directors of the Great Western Railway Company have intimated to the Bristol Chamber of Commerce their readiness by themselves or with others in connection with them, to subscribe one half and to secure 4 per cent per annum upon the remaining half of the capital requisite for the extension of the Railway from Temple Meads through Queen Square to a position at the foot of Brandon Hill on the high level with a passenger station there made accessible for Clifton traffic and with low-level Tramways in connexion there with to the Docks for goods etc. provided that the City subscribe one half of the capital, and a provisional Committee having been named to carry the matter forward I am directed as their Secretary, to inform the Docks Committee of what has passed and to request that they . . . take the matter into their consideration<sup>1</sup> . . .

Resolved unanimously That the Committee are prepared to approve any suitable scheme which has for its object the connection of the Docks with the Railways . . .

<sup>1</sup> For a succinct account of the abortive schemes of 1861–4 to provide Bristol with a central railway and station see J. Latimer, *The Annals of Bristol in the nineteenth century* (1887) pp 393–4.

**2 December 1861**

(Calendared)

Copies of resolutions passed at a public meeting on 20 November 1861 and a report by the engineers of the G.W.R., the Midland and Bristol and Exeter Railway Cos. were brought to the attention of the Committee. The resolutions supported the formation of a Company to secure a bill to provide a new and convenient station at Clifton, a more central local station at Bristol, a comprehensive tramway communication with the Quays and Docks and improved accommodation for the through traffic of the three Cos.

The engineer's report approved the proposed station at Brandon Hill and favoured Queen Square for a more central local station on grounds of cost. As for the proposed tramways the engineers thought that if another link between the railway and the proposed tramways could be added at or near Queen Square it would be a great advantage. It was also desirable that better provision for through traffic should be provided at Temple Meads. All told the engineers approved the scheme.

**4 August 1862****Reports of the Docks Committee to Council**

It will no doubt be in the recollection of the Council that the committee in their report of 6th May 1861 recommended a large reduction of dues on Tonnage and Goods, estimated at about £6,000 per annum, but in consequence of the increase of Trade the committee have the pleasure to report, that the actual decrease in the revenue arising therefrom amounted to only £5,318 11s. 11d. in the

past year which included eleven months during which such reductions have been in operation.

Although the Trade of Bristol has (in common with other ports) been in some degree affected by the disastrous Civil War in the United States (especially in the supply of Timber and Deals) the Committee have the satisfaction to state that the Tonnage from Foreign parts shows a small increase in the present year 262,327 tons against 260,861 in 1861, which it is believed will prove an almost exceptional case with reference to other Ports in the Kingdom.

The total receipts of the year including £293 14s. 5d. allowed by the bankers for interest amount to £42,664 11s. 1d.

The total expenditure of the year amounts to £49,194 9s. 1d. comprising the following items, viz.

Purchase of house and land in Coronation Road rendered necessary to be removed in consequence of a slip in the bank	£686	6s.	11d.
Improvement of the Underfall Point (on account)	£1,867	7s.	5d.
Marsh Bridge	£1,049	17s.	7d.
Feeder Wall (to support the bank)	£759	0s.	7d.
Bonds of the Corporation discharged	£13,000	0s.	0d.
Ordinary expenditure including £450 for cost of new iron barge and a large outlay for masonry and repairs of the banks of the river above and below Rownham	£31,831	16s.	7d.

By paying off the above Bonds of the corporation there will be a saving of interest to the dock estate of £525 per annum.

Of the £70,000 borrowed on the Transfer of the Docks to the Corporation only £30,500 now remains to be paid off and none of these bonds will be due till 29th June 1864.

Your Committee also report that a large shed, the dimensions of which are 220 feet by 42 feet has been recently erected on the Broad Quay and has been found exceedingly useful, not only by the importers of wine and spirits but to the trade of the port generally. The plan of another shed of a different form, but to cover the same area, which it is proposed to erect on the Grove between the two mud docks is now under consideration and it is hoped that during the current year the greater part of the scheme for the supply of shed accommodation which has been so long been required will be carried into effect.

### 15 September 1862

Read a letter from Mr. Hartnell      Bristol General Steam Navigation  
Company, Bristol,  
15 September 1862

I have earnestly and respectfully to call your attention to the serious inconvenience experienced by passengers arriving by Steamers from Ireland and the injury this Port and route receives from the

want of a ready means of disembarking outside Cumberland Basin; in proof of this I would name two instances only, but they evidence what is of frequent occurrence. On the 2nd instant the *P. Adler* Steamer arrived at Rownham Ferry about 10.30 a.m. but it was two hours before she was moored in the Basin and so much time having been lost the Battery of Horse Artillery she had brought from Dublin were detained on board till the following morning.

On Wednesday last the *Sabrina* arrived from Cork with a large number of passengers going on to London and could they have landed with their luggage near the Ferry would have been in ample time to have proceeded by the 7.40 p.m. Train but from the absence of needful accommodation . . . they were unable to do so much to their annoyance . . .

It was ordered that the consideration of such letter be postponed.

### 6 October 1862

Read a special Report from Mr. Howard on the improvement of the River, lowering the sills of the present locks at Cumberland Basin and the extension of the Wharfage and deep water berthage of the Floating Harbour . . . Report and plans to lie on the table. Mr. Howard . . . to attend to explain them at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 2 o'clock each day.

### 13 October 1862

Mr. Howard was requested to prepare a Report for deepening and improving the River to the Pheasant Quarry Point, for cutting through the Horse Shoe point, for making a New Basin near Cumberland Basin with new Lock and Entrance 80 ft. by 400 ft. and hand such Report to the Clerks to enable them to prepare a draft Report to the Council to be considered on Monday next.

### 20 October 1862

#### Report of the Docks Committee to Council

The question of an improved access to the Docks and Floating Harbour has long been one of anxious consideration to your Committee and has been the subject of frequent discussion in the Council.

Mr. Hawkshaw, in his Report on the Plans for increased Port accommodation submitted to him, recommends the deepening, widening and straightening the River Avon, as the most feasible and economical plan of affording facilities of access for Ships and Steamers of increased burthen and greater length than can now reach the Floating Harbour . . .

The question has lost none of its importance by effluxion of time, but, on the contrary, every year has increased its urgency and impressed upon your Committee the conviction that if the trade and commerce of this ancient city are to extend in proportion to the increase of other Ports, or if, indeed, the present status is to be maintained, something must be done to improve the water highway which leads to its Docks, Warehouses, and Manufactories.



As a practical proof of the necessity of some improvement, your Committee beg to draw the attention of the Council to a communication they have recently received from the Bristol Steam Navigation Company, in which it is stated that they are shortly expecting a new steamer from the Clyde; that, although her size has been curtailed to meet the difficulties of the river and the narrowness of the lock gates, she is still much larger than any they have hitherto ventured to build for this Port; that the arrivals and departures of this vessel will probably be as many as 120 in the year; that while her increased tonnage will add much to the revenue of the Dock funds, considerable additional risk will be incurred by the Company from the primitive state in which the river remains, and they therefore earnestly express the hope that prompt measures will be adopted for effecting improvements; that they trust that the large amount paid by them, as well as by other companies employing steamers making frequent and regular voyages, will justify them in this request; that there has been and still is, a tendency to increase the tonnage of vessels belonging to this Company, thus adding to Dock revenue; that the Cork Steam Ship Company are at present running their large paddle steamer *Preussischer Adler* under the disadvantage of having to have a tug to assist her in turning the sharp points in the river, and also of discharging and loading in Cumberland Basin, to the inconvenience of the numerous freighters by her. Whilst they have to pay £4 per week more Dock dues than for their other steamer, the *Sabrina*, and, that but for the obstacles now referred to, the Dock funds would long since have been benefited by the increased tonnage of the former vessel.

It needed not the relation of the facts stated in this communication to impress upon the committee the importance of the improvements hereinafter recommended . . .

Mr. Howard was instructed to prepare plans and estimates of the expence of carrying the proposed improvements into effect. That gentleman accordingly submitted several alternative plans, and, after much consideration, your committee determined to recommend for adoption by the Council the one detailed in his Report as being best calculated to meet the exigency.

### **Mr Howard's Report**

Having received from you the instructions to prepare plans and estimates of the cost of improving and deepening the River Avon, and its communication with the present Docks at Bristol, I had laid before you, on the 6th instant, six alternative plans for river improvement, and three designs for a new Entrance Basin, near Cumberland Basin. The result of your consideration of these having been to prefer the line, No.4, for improving the River, and design. No.1 for a new Basin, I have prepared, according to your further instructions, estimates to shew the cost of carrying out the more important portions of the River Improvements and of the new Entrances at the Cumberland Basin.

In the report of the 6th instant, accompanying the plans, the various lines above referred to are fully described; but it may be useful again to state that line 4 is one for straightening the river, and for deepening the bed from 7ft. 8ins. below datum at Rownham, to 13ft. 2ins. below datum at  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles below Rownham: carrying the slope from the latter point to a depth of 23ft. below datum at the mouth of the river. This line would allow entrance sills at Cumberland Basin to be laid six foot deeper than at present: the other lines referred to my former report being such as allow sills to be laid respectively 8ft. and 10ft. deeper.

The Plans and Sections laid before you have rendered it sufficiently obvious that, in the lower part of the river, there is even at neaptides, sufficient water for deeply-laiden ships to come up. It is within the  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles below Rownham, including the "Horse Shoe Point", that improvements are most necessary; the works now under consideration are therefore comprised between the "Underfall Point" and Hungroad. And as some portions even of these might be postponed until increased revenue from the finished works became available for completing them I have, in the subjoined summary of the estimates, given 1st the total cost of completing the works, and 2ndly, that necessary to be incurred before increased revenue from a larger class of vessels would be derived.

I Estimates of the cost of completing improvement in the river from "Underfall Point" to  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles below Rownham and of making new entrance basin.

Deepening the river as above mentioned and straightening, so that two large paddle steamers could pass each other at any part on neap tide. £235,033

Retaining walls to banks for the above distance including quay wall below Rownham. £50,000

Deepening the bed of the river from new depth at Rownham to present depth at Underfalls. £18,775

New Steam Basin near Cumberland Basin, with outer entrance lock 400 feet by 80 feet, and inner entrance into the Floating Harbour 80 feet wide with hydraulic machinery for working gates; also constructing on the site of the two present entrance locks one new lock, 245 feet by 60 feet, sills six feet deeper than the present, with hydraulic machinery, etc. £223,687

---

£527,495

Add for contingencies, Parliamentary and other expenses £30,000

---

£557,495

---

II Estimate of the cost of carrying out so much of the above works as to bring into operation the river improvements and the new Steam Basin.

Deepening and straightening the river from Rownham to and below "Pheasant Quarry".	£124,500
New cut through the Horse Shoe Point	£76,000
Retaining walls to river banks	£30,000
Deepening back bed of river from Rownham to Underfalls	£18,775
New Steam Basin as above, postponing the inner 80 feet entrance, and the new 60 feet lock, designed as a substitute for present entrance locks	£140,000
	<hr/>
	£389,275
Add for contingencies; Parliamentary and other expenss.	£20,000
	<hr/>
	£409,275
	<hr/>

In constructing the large entrance lock it might be necessary at first to build the chamber for only a 300 or 350 feet length, in order not to interfere with the working of the present entrances into Cumberland Basin. The lock would afterwards be extended, and the lower gates removed to the increased length.

Although the works so present under consideration are those most urgently required to improve the navigation of the Avon, the importance of removing the shoals below Hungroad, and of cutting through the "Swash", making it the only entrance to the river, should not be lost sight of. On the general plan of the river laid before you lines for such continuation of the improvements are laid down, and estimates of the cost given in my report of the 6th inst. As a private Company have already obtained an Act for making a landing stage at the mouth of the river, and provision is made for its removal to the new Channel, should the North Channel be closed, I have not included in my estimates any cost of providing landing accommodation.

The deepening of the bed of the river above Rownham . . . should also be considered; both as a means of improving the navigation up to Bathurst Basin, and of increasing the volume of tidal water for scouring. The effect of enlarging the section area of the river will be to a certain extent an increased tendency to deposit immediately below Rownham. To counteract this, in the designs of the new works, I have, as far as possible, avoided any unnecessary increase of the width of the river; and provided for the new slopes of the banks, consequent upon the increased depth, by putting in deeper retaining walls. The result of long-continued observation of the banks, where so walled, is to show that the repeated wash of the steamers prevents, to a great extent, any deposit on the upper part of the banks. The bottom width of the deepened bed is also kept as narrow as practicable, so that the scour at low water from floods, and from any artificial means, may be rendered as effective as possible. There will be still some amount of dredging necessary below Rownham. The

effect of the proposed enlargement of the sectional area in the upper part of the river will be to increase the scour in the lower parts.

The estimates for these important works . . . have been prepared with much care . . . The estimates are framed on the assumption that the stone is to be sold . . . or used for masonry on the works. If run to spoil, the work would of course be much more costly. The importance of some organised plan for getting rid of the stone will be evident from the detailed quantities which show that, in carrying out the works contained in the above estimate, there are comprised about 900,000 tons of limestone, and about a million tons of coarse conglomerate rock or hard sandstone shale.

### **3 November 1862**

That the Council having considered the Report of the Docks Committee on Mr. Howard's plans . . . and feeling assured that the said improvement would be of immense benefit to the City, can be accomplished without further taxation, and ought to be commenced without delay, hereby directs that the necessary notices be given for an application to Parliament in the ensuing Session, for an Act to enable the Town Council to make improvements in the River and Harbour, and to raise the funds requisite for these objects by the re-adjustment of the rates and dues now payable by Goods and Shipping, the levying dues on certain Articles now exempt and by charging rents on Shipping for the use of the Floating Harbour after specified times, and also to enable the Council to transfer to the Dock Estate, the Town Dues, Mayor's Dues, Water Bailiff's and Quay Warden's fees and the Cranage and Wharfage Rates, and in lieu thereof to release the fixed Property within the Borough from the rate of 4d. in the pound authorized to be levied thereupon by the Docks Transfer Act of 1848 and also to release the fixed Property within the Ancient limits of the City from the sum of £2,400 per annum authorized to be levied thereon by the Bristol Dock Act of 1803.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Council charged the Docks Committee with obtaining the opinion of Mr Ure, the engineer who had carried on the improvements of the Clyde and Tyne, on Howard's plans and estimates.

### **17 November 1862**

(Calendared)

Read two letters from Mr J. Bingham, 15 Parliament St. Westminster 8 November 1862. The first informed the Committee that he had been instructed to take the initial steps for obtaining an Act to establish a Co. to construct the Bristol central railway and terminus. Did the Committee wish for any special provision in the bill? Mr. Bingham was pleased that the promoters were unfettered by any alliances and hence free from the dictation of any railway Co.

The second letter said that he had received instructions to take the initial steps for a bill to promote a railway between Bristol and Portishead and a floating pier at Portishead. He feared that this

beneficial project might interfere with some corporation land.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This became The Bristol and Portishead Pier and Railway (making) Act 26 & 27 Vict. cap. cvii. For a brief description of the line see E. T. MacDermott (revised by C. R. Clinker), *History of the Great Western Railway* (1964) ii 89.

### 18 December 1862

It was Resolved that the Clerks do take the necessary steps to carry into effect the Order of the Town Council by making the required Deposits [at the Private Bill Office] . . .

That this Committee in consenting to make such Deposit desire to record it as their opinion that they thereby give no sanction either to the principle or details of the measure but that this Committee either as individual members or as members of the Town Council, are to be at full liberty to take such steps with reference to the further progress of the Bill through Parliament, as they or any of them, shall think advisable.

### 5 January 1863

(Calendared)

Letter from Herbert Thomas,<sup>1</sup> Chairman of the Emigration Committee 52 Queen Square, Bristol 2 January 1863. The Emigration Committee believes government would be induced to send their emigrants from Bristol if a suitable depot is provided. It is suggested that the Docks Committee should provide this as has been done by Dock Cos. at Birkenhead, Southampton and Plymouth. It would be a profitable investment.

<sup>1</sup> He was brother of Christopher Thomas, Docks Committee member 1848-1878 and a well known philanthropist, magistrate and partner in the soap manufacturing firm of Thomas, Fripp and Thomas. In a second letter dated 12 January 1863 Herbert Thomas suggested that a vacant portion of the late Great Western Hotel would make a suitable depot and Mardyke a convenient place of embarkation. The Docks Committee decided to inspect and ascertain the rent. (*Minutes* 12 January 1863).

### 12 January 1863

The Town clerk stated that at a meeting of the Town Council the following Resolution was passed.

That in the opinion of this Council it is essential for the preservation and increase of the Trade of the Port that the River Avon be deepened widened and straightened from Rownham Ferry to and including Horse Shoe Point; and also that Land be purchased within the Floating Harbour for the purpose of improvements and for making new Wharves.

That this Council having considered the report printed by order of the Docks Committee and the several alternative schemes therein contained and bearing in mind the objections urged against any increase of the existing Dues on Goods and Ships, is of opinion that the above named works and purchase of Lands may be accomplished (as appears by Mr. Lire's and Mr. Howard's Estimates) by borrowing a sum not exceeding £400,000 the Interest upon which can be

provided from the following sources and without any risk of Taxation to the Ratepayers viz.

Dock Surplus	£9,700
Dues on Corn and Provisions	£2,700
Rents on Ships in Floating Harbour	£1,000
Rents from surplus Lands	£1,000
Increase of Trade	£2,000

---

£16,400

and the Law Officers be, and are hereby directed, to proceed with the Bill now deposited modifying the same, in accordance with the terms of this Resolution.

# Docks Committee Minute Book Vol. 5

## 4 May 1863–29 April 1867

**8 June 1863**

The sub-committee recommend that in future the Dock Dues, Town Dues, Mayor's Dues, Water Bailiff and Quay Warden's Fees, Wharfage, Anchorage and Moorage Dues be collected at the Docks Office as being more convenient to the Merchants and Traders' . . .

By this arrangement a saving of £250 per annum will be effected in the collection of these Dues . . .

<sup>1</sup> The Secretary was in future to be the Collector of these dues and to be paid an increase of salary of £150 per annum. The late Collector's two Clerks employed by him were to assist the Secretary being paid £150 and £75 per annum respectively.

**25 June 1863**

The Committee are of opinion that if the Council acting as the Local Board of Health will consent to undertake in future the repairs of the Dock Roads it will be desirable to abolish the Tolls now taken at the Underfalls and Totterdown Gates.

Read a Memorial from Merchants and others praying for the relief of the Trade of the Port from the burthen of Dock Dues on Goods of Foreign growth or produce brought coastwise.

**27 July 1863**

That it be recommended to the Council to grant the prayer of the memorial presented on the 25th June . . .

And the Question being put thereon the same was carried by a majority.

### Surveyors Report on the present state of the Roads in the Dock Estate

The principal portion of these Roads are in a bad state of repair . . . this being so I am of opinion that before taking to these roads . . . improvements should be made and also that the Roads to be taken to should be clearly defined as to width and etc. I estimate the cost of these improvements at about £264 per mile making a total cost for the 4 miles of £1,056 after which I estimate the cost of keeping the same in repairs will not exceed £100 per mile per annum: the present cost being about £130.

I find the amount of Tolls collected during the year ending 30th April 1863 to be as follows.

Overfall Gate	£466	9	4			
Less Wages to Toll Keeper	62	8	0	£404	1	4
Prince Street Gate	297	13	11			
Less wages to Toll Keeper & Assistant	93	12	0	£204	1	11
Totterdown Gate	326	7	3			
Less wages to Toll Keeper	62	8	0	£263	19	0
				<hr/>		
				£872	2	6

From the foregoing it will be seen that there are 3 Toll Gates on these Roads only 2 of which it is proposed should be removed, the Prince Street gate being retained. I would therefore respectfully submit as the best arrangement . . . that the Local Board of Health undertake the cleansing and repair of the through line of road . . . being a length of about 3 miles. This would relieve the Dock Estate of all the Roads of the greatest amount of traffic . . . without interfering . . . with their private interest at either of the Basins or Prince Street Bridge and will give us the first cost £792 and £300 per annum for the future maintenance . . .

Frederick Ashmead  
Surveyor

It was resolved that the terms . . . be accepted.

### 3 August 1863

### Report of the Docks Committee to Council

The tonnage from Foreign parts shows an increase of 15,002 tons in the year, arising from the unusually large importation of Bread stuffs. Though total import of Corn, Flour and provisions in the present year being 88,680 tons against 69,602 tons in 1862, but with the exception of timber on which there was a falling off of about 6,000 tons, there has been a small increase on most other articles of import.

Notwithstanding the continuance of the Civil War in America, which has more or less affected every branch of Trade in the United Kingdom, and that there was a very large falling off in the receipts of Dues on Shipping and Goods during the first five months of the docks financial year amounting to upwards of £3,100 yet such was this improvement in Trade during the remainder of the year, the committee have great pleasure in stating that the actual deficiency on these Dues was only £12 12s. 10d. and had the reduction of Dues in 1861 come into operation on the 1st May instead of 1st June there would have been an increase of upwards of £600 as compared with 1862.

The total receipts of the year amount to £42,457 0s. 5d. against £42,664 11s. 1d. in 1862.

The total expenditure of the year amounts to £31,666 5s. 8d. in which are comprised the following items viz.

Improvement of Underfall Point	£998	1s.	3d.
(on account)			
Marsh Bridge Balance	£235	0s.	5d.
Feeder Wall Balance	£165	6s.	2d.
River & Harbour improvement	£301	17s.	7d.
Law and Parliamentary expenses	£600	0s.	0d.
opposing Railway Junction and Channel			
Docks Bills on account			
Ordinary expenditure	£29,366	0d.	3d.
	£31,666	5s.	8d.

The improvement at Underfalls Point has been nearly completed



and considerable progress has been made in the Walling of the New Cut between Bedminster Bridge and Underfalls.

The Shed on the Grove (No.2) referred to in the committee's last annual report, has been finished for sometime past, and three others of small dimensions are now in course of construction, which will be erected on sites between Guinea Street, Ferry Slip and Redcliff Back Ferry Slip, where Sheds are much wanted.

Your committee having received a memorial numerously signed by Merchants and Traders, manufacturers and others praying for the immediate relief of the trade of the Port from the burden of dock dues on goods of Foreign growth or produce brought coastwise, after giving the subject much consideration and consulting the law officers on the legal powers of the council to make such remissions have come to the following resolution. "That it be recommended to the council to grant the prayer of the memorial presented on the 25th June last, and that Dock Dues on Goods of Foreign growth on produce brought coastwise be not collected after 31 October next ensuing", as however all the members of the committee do not agree in the desirability of this resolution, it is to be understood, that it is not to be considered binding on them in their individual capacity.

#### **24 August 1863**

The Committee then proceeded to open Tenders for the new Bridge at the North Lock when the Tender of Messrs. Hennem, Spinks and Else at £1190 0s. 0d. . . . was accepted.

#### **31 October 1863**

Mr. Howard produced a plan for improving the entrance to the Floating Harbour and also cutting off points in the River above the Horseshoe Point which having been considered it was carried by a majority that it be submitted to Council.

#### **15 January 1864**

The Committee proceeded to the consideration of the following Bills viz.

#### **The Bristol and North Somerset Railway Extension Bill'**

Resolved that although . . . Tramways to some parts of the Quays would prove advantageous to the Trade of the Port yet they think it very undesirable for the Corporation to yield to a private Company any rights over the Public Quays as sought for in this Bill.

#### **Bristol Port Extension Railway Bill'**

It was resolved . . . that the proposed narrowing of the Floating Harbour above Bristol Bridge and two crossings of the Harbour . . . are most objectionable. That the observations . . . on the Tramways

proposed to be made by the North Somerset Railway Bill apply with like force to the Tramways proposed by this Bill.

### **Bristol Central Station and Railways Bill<sup>3</sup>**

It was resolved that . . . the proposal to take for the purpose of this Railway the space of the Floating Harbour between the Drawbridge and the Stone Bridge and the appropriation of 900 feet of Quay frontage cannot be entertained without the provision by the Company of equivalent accommodation elsewhere. The Committee beg to draw the attention of the Parliamentary Bill Committee [of the Council] to the Engineering difficulties stated in Mr. Howard's Report and suggest that sufficient provision should be made to prevent any obstruction to the Trade of the Port during the progress of the work. The same observations in relation to Tramways in the other Bills in the opinion of this Committee apply to the proposed Tramways in this Bill.

### **Bristol Port and Channel Docks<sup>4</sup>**

It was Resolved that . . . great care should be taken to define the powers of the Company as to dredging and that they should be required to remove at their expence any obstruction to the free navigation of the River which may be occasioned by their operations. That no more Sand belonging to the Corporation should be taken than is required for the actual purpose of the work . . .

That Sec. No. 38 is very objectionable and ought not to be retained in the Bill.

<sup>1</sup> In 1863 an Act had established the Bristol and North Somerset Railway Co. to make a line from Radstock to Bristol into which had been written a number of clauses protecting the Corporation's rights (26 and 27 Vict. cap. clxviii). The 1864 estension bill did not reach the statute book in that year.

<sup>2</sup> This became 27 and 28 Vict. cap. cclvii.

<sup>3</sup> This bill did not reach the statute book in 1864.

<sup>4</sup> This became 27 and 28 Vict. cap. ccxli and was the parent Act for the construction of the Avonmouth Dock.

### **18 January 1864**

The sub-committee on Sheds reported that they had taken into consideration the subject of providing a Transit Shed for Wines and Spirits and [concluded] that it was most desirable for the present to rent a Warehouse for the purpose . . . until the site of the permanent Shed was determined. [Adopted]

To the Honorable the Commissioners of Her Majesty's Customs  
The Memorial of the Bristol Docks  
Committee of the Town Council of Bristol.

Humbly Sheweth

That your memorialists are desirous of affording the same facilities in the port of Bristol as are provided in Liverpool, Glasgow and other Ports to Steam vessels carrying Wines, Spirits and other articles liable

to duty . . . in promotion of which object your memorialists are about to erect Bonded Transit Sheds to be approved of by your Board . . . and your memorialists consider it desirable . . . that the regulations of the Customs Department in Bristol . . . should be assimilated to those of Liverpool, Glasgow and other ports where the system of Bonded Transit Sheds is in operation . . .

### **29 February 1864**

It was Resolved that the probability of Docks being made at the mouth of the Avon renders it increasingly important that a moderate scheme of River and Harbour improvement with a system of Tramways such as advised by the Parliamentary Bills Committee [of the Council] be promptly carried out and that the Engineer be instructed to direct his early attention to the subject with a view to the preparation of a complete scheme.

### **11 April 1864**

Read a Report from Mr. Howard upon the subject of the proposed occupation and crossing of the Harbour by the Port Extension Railway . . . It was Resolved that subject to improvements of detail to be suggested by Mr. Howard as referred to in his Report the Committee will consent to the settlement of a Clause for the occupation and crossing of the Harbour on the general basis of the design now shewn on the plan proposed by the Promoter.

### **1 August 1864**

#### **Report of the Docks Committee to Council**

In consequence of the abundant crops of Grain at the last Harvest and the short supply of sugar from abroad, there has been a large falling off in Tonnage from Foreign parts. The Tonnage in the present year being only 228,694 tons against 277,329 tons in 1863 showing a decrease of 48,365 tons.

The receipts for tonnage rates in Goods during the year amounted to £25,483 15s. 5d. against £29,412 13s. 10d. in 1863 but the decrease in the Revenue from these sources amounting to £3,928 18s. 5d. was occasioned solely by the falling off in the import of Sugar and Grain in the past year and by the abolition of Dock Dues on Foreign Goods brought coastwise from the 31st October last, which latter on a moderate computation would in the half year ending 30th April have amounted to £500.

The total receipts for the year including £408 7s. 5d. allowed by the bankers for interest amount to £39,059 19s. 2d.

The total expenditure of the year amounts to £37,871 6s. 0d. comprising the following items.

Contracts on account of New Iron Bridge			
North Lock Cumberland Basin	£500	0s.	0d.
Expenses incurred on bill before Parliament			
Sessions 1862/3	£647	7s.	4d.

Allowed the local board of Heath towards the alteration and improvement of the roads and gratuities to toll keepers discharged	£436	7s.	4d.
Law and Parliament expenses in apposing junction railway and channel docks Bills session 1862/3	£844	14s.	4d.
Alterations and furniture for shipping dues office	£136	0s.	4d.
Bonds of the Corporation discharged	£7,500	0s.	0d.
Ordinary expenditure including £551 6s. 4d. for completing the new gates for the North Lock and about £1,000 expended for masonry and Repairs of the Banks of the River Avon	£27,807	4s.	0d.

Besides the Bonds of the Corporation for £7,500 paid off, another bond for the like amount was discharged on 29th June last — this will effect a saving of interest to the Dock Estate of £650 per annum. There remains now only £15,500 to be paid off of the £70,000 borrowed on the transfer of the docks to the corporation.

#### **24 September 1864    The report of the Docks Committee to Council on the subject of Harbour and River Improvement.**

Your Committee report that they carefully examined the plans and estimates that have been submitted to them by Mr. Howard . . . and they are happy to add that they entirely approve of the principles on which such plans have been prepared.

Your Committee feel that important as this measure is, there will be but little hope of carrying it to successful issue unless all parties are united, and the conflicting views and interests which have hitherto prevailed with such disastrous results are conciliated.

Your Committee, in preparing this Report, have kept these objects steadily in view, and while they admit that any measure of Dock improvement must entail a public liability, they express a decided opinion that with reference to the present position and future prospects of the Dock Estate, the improvements now proposed may be effected without adding to the burdens of trade or offering the least chance of further taxation on the ratepayers.

Mr. Howard, in his Report, has adverted to the probable operation of the new Channel Dock on the Bristol Dock Estate, and has suggested that a keen competition between the two undertakings may hereafter arise for every branch of trade. Your Committee concur to some extent in this view, but they have no fears for the future if the citizens will now regard the formation of a new and possibly competing Dock as an admitted fact, and will agree to place their own Dock property on such a footing as will enable it to contend on fair terms with an efficient and well situated rival.

The suggestions of the Committee for Home Improvements are based on the views that were submitted to Parliament in the last session . . . viz. that the New Channel Dock shall accommodate the

ocean going and larger class of vessel and that the Bristol Docks be made accessible at ordinary tides for sailing vessels of 1,200 tons and, steamers of 800 tons register respectively. If improvements to this moderate extent be granted, your Committee believe that both undertakings will work in harmony and it is hoped flourish together. If the proposed measure fails the citizens must be prepared, at no distant time, to meet the engagements which decreasing trade at home will certainly impose on the fixed property of Bristol.

The experience of the late contests has induced your Committee to exclude from their Report all points upon which a difference of opinion exists,<sup>1</sup> or which may lead to a Parliamentary contest. Mr. Howard's plans, therefore, are now confined to the following most important objects *viz.*

- First      A new Entrance Lock from the river into Cumberland Basin.
- Second    A new Junction Lock from the basin into the Floating Harbour.
- Third      The removal of the projecting points and obstructions in the river on both sides from Cumberland Basin to and including Pheasant Quarry Point.

It is difficult to over estimate the value of either branch of the proposed improvements . . . .

Mr. Howard estimates that the cost of all these works will be £295,000 . . . Your Committee . . . are of opinion that Mr. Howard's estimates may be relied on.

To meet the interest on this outlay, which Your Committee have placed at the sum of £300,000, the annual sum of £12,994 — which is the estimated surplus income of the Dock Estate on an average of the last three years — will be available, and to this fund may be added any future excess of income, for which, however Your Committee have taken no credit, although from the experience of the past a further progressive increase in the Dock receipts may be prudently and safely expected . . .

Your Committee think it necessary to consider further how the required capital may be most advantageously raised. They will not, however, conceal their opinion that it cannot be done unless the amount be guaranteed out of the Borough Fund . . . The citizens of Bristol at present are the owners of an incumbered but valuable estate; they cannot divest themselves of the liabilities which they have incurred; and if they would maintain the value of their property, and make it adequate to future emergencies, they must be prepared to improve it, and, if necessary borrow money on its credit.

#### **Report of the Engineer to the Docks Committee** (Calendared)

The City Docks cannot compete with Avonmouth for the largest class of ocean-going steamers. The Engineer foresees the possibility of keep competition between the City Docks and Avonmouth for *every* branch of trade. It is difficult to design improvements which should

both seem moderate now but adequate to the needs of the port in the future. The need is first to widen the Junction Lock from 45ft to 60ft, secondly to make an Entrance Lock of 60ft width and extra 3ft of depth and thirdly to improve the river. Cutting through the Horseshoe bend is not as pressing as the above.

<sup>1</sup> That is, an interchange of Rates and Dues between the City and the Dock Estate and the provision of further wharfage accommodation.

### 23 January 1865

Mr. Howard was requested to furnish sketches for a new Bridge in lieu of the Swivel Bridge commonly called the Drawbridge.

### 30 January 1865

Read a letter from Mr. Dalrymple,

Bristol Port Railway and Pier Company  
Bristol 16 January 1865

It will be in your recollection that in the discussion before the Parliamentary Committee of last Session on the Bristol Channel Docks Bill and particularly on the provisions of the measure whereby the Corporation consented to modify their rights in the collection of the rates and dues at the proposed new works, the question of the position of other Companies having or proposing Works in, or in the neighbourhood of Bristol and also liable to payment of dues was raised by the representatives of the Portishead Railway Company and Mr. Brice (for you) when under examination both in the House of Commons and (more fully) in the House of Lords expressed his belief that at the proper time, when the respective parties having completed their Works would be liable to pay and the Corporation to demand rates there would be a general feeling in the Corporation in favour of equalizing the dues in respect of all the Companies having water communication with Bristol (*Commons Evidence* 2,169 *et seq.* and *Lords evidence* 2,145 *et seq.*)

On behalf of the Port and Pier Company I am now instructed to bring officially before you the fact that it is intended to open the Railway and Pier for traffic on a very early day in March and respectfully to ask that the Council would favourably consider this position of the Company with relation to its liability to Dues with a view to placing it on an equality in this respect with the Channel Docks Company whose liabilities are defined in Clause 46 of their Act of Incorporation . . .

Resolved That the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Mr. Pethick, Aldm. Ford and Mr. Castle be a sub-committee to consider and report on the subject.

### 7 February 1865

Read a letter from Mr. George Wills, Chairman of the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce . . .

Sir,

I beg to hand you the resolutions passed today at a Committee Meeting of this Chamber to consider the Docks Bill now before Parliament.

The Committee regret that the recommendations contained in the resolutions of the Chamber of 10 October for the exchange of rates have not received any attention in the framing of the present Bill; not however to dwell on any objections which can reasonably be postponed the Committee confined their present remonstrance to the specific subjects which they hold to be of vital importance and they trust your board will be induced to incorporate in the bill the two amendments herewith proposed in order to obviate the recurrence of a parliamentary struggle . . . that a Proviso be added to Clause 2 of the Bill as follows.

Provided always the Corporation shall not increase the existing rates on Shipping and Goods as at present charged or any of them, or impose any new rates or dues and nothing in this Act contained shall prevent the Corporation from reducing any rates or dues receivable by the Corporation on Shipping or Goods.

That this Committee strongly object to the last section of the last Clause in the Bill empowering the Corporation to expend the moneys of the Docks Estate for any future measure . . . [and] that unless these concessions be made this Committee will feel it their duty to recommend the Chamber to petition Parliament against the Bill.

**9 February 1865**

**Report of the Docks Committee on the Bristol Docks Bill  
to the Council.**

The Chamber [of Commerce] objects to that part of Section 24 of the Bill which empowers the Corporation to make future applications to Parliament for Dock purposes out of the Dock Estate.

Prior to the passing of the Bristol Dock Act 1848 the Dock Company were possessed of this power, but it did not pass to the Council with the Dock property because, by the Act of 1848, the Dock Estate was made part of the Borough Fund and it seems to be admitted that Town Councils have no power to originate new measures at the public expense, in places where the Borough Fund is supplemented by a Borough Rate.

The present Bill, except as regards the power asked for by Section 24 is strictly based on the Report of your Committee which was approved almost unanimously by the Council on 11th October last, and it has since been the object of your Committee to frame a scheme in which all parties might substantially agree, and from which all topics likely to provoke opposition should be omitted.

Hence your Committee have not deemed it prudent to give weight to the suggestions that were made by the Chamber of Commerce to repeal the Rates now paid by the city in aid of the Dock Estate, and to amalgamate the Town and other Dues now levied on the Shipping

interests into a consolidated Dock Rate. Hence, also, no proposal has been made to improve the wharfage accommodation within the Harbour, because, in the opinion of your Committjee, either of such projects would lead to active opposition, and an active opposition in the present state of the law would result in the withdrawal of the Bill.

Provisions to effect both these objects held a prominent place in the Bill of 1863 . . .

Your Committee, however, think it right to add, that the experience which was then acquired by some of their members does not encourage them to resort to the expedient of another private guarantee for the purpose of promoting a public improvement, and without such guarantee, or such provision as is proposed by Section 24, your Committee believe that it will always be in the power of a small minority to defeat the most important measure; because no body of Trustees can be expected, at their own risk, and without any personal advantage, to incur, for public purposes, the formidable expenses that attend upon even a nominal Parliamentary contest.

Your Committee, therefore, were influenced, by these views, to insert Clause 24 . . . in the Bill, but they consider it right to say that they entertain no strong feeling or opinion on the matter. Therefore they will readily consent to relinquish the power . . .

There were other points upon which the Chamber was not satisfied but it is not necessary to advert to them, as mutual explanations, at an interview between the Committees, have removed all differences of opinion . . .

Your Committee, however, add that they have readily agreed, at the request of the Chamber, to insert a provision in the Bill that the total expenditure to be incurred under it shall not exceed £300,000. This limitation, though not expressed with sufficient clearness, was always intended by the Council, and the estimates . . . have been framed accordingly. The sum to be borrowed, not exceeding £230,000, will remain unaltered, and the balance will be supplied from time to time out of the surplus revenue of the Dock Estate, under Section 14 of the Bill, which, except as regards the execution of the works thereby authorised and the means of paying for them, does not alter . . . any of the provisions of the Dock Transfer Act.

If therefore at any time during the progress of the works, or after they are finished, there shall be a surplus Income more than sufficient for the purposes of the Bill (viz. for the execution of the authorized works at a total cost of £300,000 including the borrowed Capital) then such surplus Revenue, after payment of Interest on the borrowed Capital, will continue in its present channel and will be applicable to the reduction of Rates, under the Act of 1848.

### **13 March 1865**

The Engineer was directed to turn his attention to the necessity of providing further enclosed Shed accommodation.



**28 May 1865**

The Clerks reported that the Docks Bill received the Royal Assent on Friday last.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 28 & 29 Vict. cap xxxiii The Bristol Dock Act whose essential purpose was to provide the Council with powers to improve the Avon, construct new entrance and junction locks, improve the Cumberland basin, buy Rownham ferry and to borrow substantial sums.

**17 July 1865**

It was moved by Alderman Ford

That in the opinion of this Committee it will be advisable to dispose of the Water space above the Drawbridge and apply the proceeds of the sale to the purchase of Lands adjacent to the Floating Harbour where Public Wharfs may be constructed in lieu of those now existing above the Drawbridge. The Committee is also of the opinion that the consequent absence of the passage of vessels up to and through the Drawbridge would materially increase the accommodation of Vessels along the Narrow and Broad Quays.

And thereupon

Mr. Thomas moved as an Amendment to the said Motion

That this Committee with reference especially to the increasing requirements of Shipping frequenting the Harbour and the legal and other difficulties which at present prevent the acquisition of extended Quay accommodation elsewhere is not prepared to sanction the proposed conversion into Land of the Water space between the Stonebridge and the Drawbridge . . .

And the Question being put on the Amendment the same was carried by a majority.

**31 July 1865****Report of the Docks Committee to Council**

The Committee are glad to report an increase in the revenue arising from Dues on Tonnage and Goods amounting to £1,794 0s. 7d. and in the Tonnage from Foreign parts of 13,729 tons as compared with the preceding year. This increase would have been much greater, but for the long continuance of contrary winds during the last six weeks of the Docks financial year, which retarded the arrival of many Vessels with cargoes that would otherwise have been included in the present years accounts.

The total receipts for the year including £727 15s. 0d. allowed by the Bankers for interest, amount to £40,816 5s. 8d.

The total expenditure of the year amounts to £35,420 9s. 9d. comprising the following items.

Balance of cost of New Iron Bridge for the			
North Lock, Cumberland Basin	£1,123	1s.	4d.
Parliamentary Agents and other incidental			
expenses for the Bristol Docks Bill 1865	£607	11s.	9d.
Bond of the Corporation discharged 29th June			
1864	£7,500	0s.	0d.

Ordinary expenditure including about £650  
expended for Masonry and repairs of the Banks  
of the Avon £26,189 16s. 8d.

The Balance in hand the 30th April 1865 was  
£23,124 4s. 3d.

The sheds referred to in the last annual report as being then in the course of construction, have long since been completed; and these as well as the Transit Shed on the Broad Quay have afforded great accommodation to various branches of the Trade from Foreign ports. The council is aware that another large Transit Shed is in course of erection.

### 16 October 1865

That Mr. Howard be appointed the Engineer to complete the plans and carry out the new Works authorized by the Act of 1865 and that his remuneration be 2½ per cent on the amount of the Parliamentary Estimate of £300,000 . . .

That a sub-committee . . . be appointed to consider the proposal to establish a Railway communication between Temple Meads and the Floating Harbour and the establishment at Wapping of a Wharf Depot . . .

### 20 November 1865

It was resolved unanimously in the opinion of the sub-committee it is highly necessary for the Trading interests of the Port that the site for . . . the proposed Wharf Depot at Wapping should be acquired by the Corporation without any delay . . .

Resolved that it is also desirable that an effort should be made to purchase by Agreement Mr. Teast's interest in the Wapping property . . .

### 27 November 1865

Mr. Teast considers that his interest in the Property at Wapping held under two Leases granted to him by the Dean and Chapter of Bristol at the respective yearly rents of £20 and £10 is worth £30,000 . . .

The Sub-Committee . . . determined that they could not advise the Docks Committee to accept the only alternative now open to them of offering Mr. Teast £30,000.

### 13 December 1865

It was Resolved that the memorandum now read of which the following is a copy be approved and a copy thereof transmitted to Mr. Castle the Chairman of the Joint [Station] Committee.

1. The Docks Committee approve the principle of the Railways and Bristol Harbour Junction Railway and Wharf Depot Bill and will be prepared prior to the second reading of such Bill in the House of Commons to advise the Corporation to elect to provide the

- Wharf Depot as defined by Sections 4 and 6 of the Bill.
2. Such Wharf Depot to be constituted a Railway Wharf to be used by the three Companies and any other Railway Companies that can obtain access thereto.
  3. The Wharf Depot or any part thereof when not required for the use of the Companies may be used for the general purposes of the Port, but under such arrangements as shall not interfere with the Railway Traffic.
  4. The quantity of Land to be purchased by the Corporation for the Wharf Depot shall be of the breadth of 150 feet from the proposed new line of Quay Wall to be erected by the Corporation and as shew in the Plan hereunto annexed.
  5. The Corporation shall find the necessary Capital £50,000 for the purchase of the land and the construction of the Wharf Depot with all necessary . . . works and machinery, Sheds and Warehouses for the temporary Bonding of Goods destined for transit by Railway and shall keep such Wharf and Works in good repair at their own expense.
  6. The three Companies shall provide the land for and shall complete the Railway with such Buildings, Goods Sheds and Warehouses as they shall require in the rear of the Wharf Depot and shall find the labour that may be required for the user thereof.
  7. None of the Corporate Rights of the Corporation especially their right to levy from time to time Dock and Tonnage Rates and Wharfage and other Rates and Dues on Shipping and Goods or either of them using the Port and Harbour of Bristol shall be interfered with or affected by the Bill.
  8. To reimburse the Corporation for the outlay . . . in providing the Wharf Depot and maintaining the same they shall be paid by the three Companies in lieu of and in substitution for any further Rates and Dues to be imposed on Shipping or Goods in respect of the user of the Wharf Depot, the yearly sum of £2,000 by way of interest on the Capital Fund of £50,000 to be raised by the Corporation . . .

### **18 December 1865**

The sub-committee on the equalization of Dues reported that they recommended the Committee to advise the Council That the Dues to be taken in respect of Vessels and Goods using the Piers of the Bristol Port Railway and Pier Company and Portishead Pier and Railway Company be the same as those authorized to be taken by the Bristol Port and Channel Docks Company under the provisions of the Bristol Port and Channel Dock Act 1864.

. . . the same was confirmed and approved.

The Committee having resumed consideration of the application of Messrs. Castle and Co, in respect of goods in transit charged dues and having found that the practice in London and Liverpool very similar

to that adopted in this port are of opinion that it is not desirable to alter the practice.<sup>1</sup>

### **Railway and other local bills**

Observations by the Docks Committee for the information of the Parliamentary Bills Committee (of the Council) (Calendard).

The bills that affect the Dock estate are

1. Railways and Bristol Harbour Junction Railway and Wharf Depot.
2. The Bristol and North Somerset Railway (Bristol lines)
3. The Bristol Port Extension Railway
4. The Bristol and Portishead Pier and Railway
5. The Swansea Harbour Trust.

The first is of great public and commercial importance.

Its purpose is to connect the termini at Temple Meads with a proposed new Wharf at Wapping for the reception of goods for transit by railway or shipment. The plan was suggested by Mr. Howard before the passing of the Bristol Port Extension Railways Act 1864.<sup>2</sup> and at the instance of the Docks Committee section 29 of that Act safeguarded the rights of the Corporation to carry out such a scheme. The Docks Committee regrets that the Port Extension Co. thinks the present bill inconsistent with their 1864 Act.

The bill empowers the Railway Cos.<sup>3</sup> to make the railway and wharf depot and purchase the necessary lands. The Corporation may within one month after the passing of the Act elect to provide the wharf depot and hold it as part of the Corporate estate raising the necessary finance from surplus revenues of the Dock estate and borrowing on mortgage of that estate up to £50,000 at interest not exceeding 5%. The bill makes provision for use of the Depot by the railway Cos. at rates to be agreed between them and the Corporation. Permissive powers are granted to allow the Cos. and the Corporation, either jointly or alone, to buy the tolls of Princes Street Bridge.<sup>4</sup>

The Docks Committee regrets that valuable parts of the Harbour frontage are in private hands and if the site of the proposed wharf is not taken it will also pass into private hands as besides the G.W.R. and the Bristol and Exeter cos. the Bristol and North Somerset and the Bristol Port Extension Cos. are contending for possession. No public benefit will accrue if these latter Cos. gain possession: they only want it to extend their tramways.

The terms as set out in the memorandum accepted by the Committee on 13 December cannot fail to satisfy the Council. The Corporation is recommended to oppose the two bills being promoted by the Bristol and North Somerset Co. because the tramway proposals would only place further powers over the Harbour in the Cos. hands. Likewise the Corporation should oppose the Bristol Port Extension Railway bill since the Co. was seeking to acquire land on the south side of the Floating Harbour where none of their authorized works were situated.<sup>5</sup>

No objection can be made to the Bristol and Portishead Pier and Railway bill provided the objects are within the limits of the Co's. 1863 Act.<sup>6</sup> The bill to extend the Pilotage District of Swansea is of no importance to Bristol.

<sup>1</sup> Messrs Castle and Co. had claimed in a letter to the Committee that they were compelled to send the bulk of their imports to other Bonding ports via Liverpool and London rather than Bristol because in Bristol the goods were not treated as foreign goods in transit and hence not charged dues (see *Minutes* 11 December 1865).

<sup>2</sup> i.e. 27 and 28 Vict. cap. cclvii.

<sup>3</sup> i.e. the G.W.R. and Bristol and Exeter Cos.

<sup>4</sup> This became 29 and 30 Vict. cap. cxlviii, The Bristol Harbour Railway Act. The three quarters of a mile of line connected the Great Western at the point of junction with the Bristol and Exeter on the Harbour Bridge outside Temple Meads to the new wharf on the Floating Harbour. it was a very expensive project involving a long viaduct three iron bridges over streets, an opening bridge and a tunnel of 282 yards under Redcliff churchyard. It was eventually opened for traffic in 1872.

<sup>5</sup> The first bill became 29 and 30 Vict. cclxiii which however only authorized the Co. to raise more capital; the second bill did not become law in 1866.

<sup>6</sup> This became 29 and 30 Vict. cap. lxxxviii.

## 19 February 1866

Letter from George Wort, Rownham Tavern, Hotwells 14 February 1866.

I beg most respectfully to hand you the Traffic of Rownham Ferry by which you will see for the last 6 months 149,508 passengers crossed . . . The falling off of the Traffic I consider is in consequence of the loss of the Tea Gardens on the Leigh side also through Vauxhall Ferry and other boats below the Suspension Bridge taking passengers across the River which very much injures this Ferry . . .

## 6 August 1866

### Report of the Docks Committee to Council

On referring to the Tonnage statistics it will be seen that there was a considerable falling off in the Import of Timber in the past year amounting to no less than 24,000 tons and upwards of 7,000 tons of Guano and other articles, but notwithstanding this large deficiency the committee have much pleasure in reporting to the Council that it was more than made up by a larger import of other Merchandize so that the increase in Tonnage from Foreign ports for the year ending 30th April 1866 was 11,035 Tons, and in the revenue arising from Dues on tonnage and goods of £865 4s. 3d. as compared with 1865, and the increase on both of these items would doubtless have been much larger had the importation of Sugar from Havannah and South American ports kept pace with former years, but the great demand for Sugar from the United States subsequent to the termination of the Civil War drew off the supplies which in the usual course would have found their way to this market.

The total expenditure of the year amounts to £38,858 8s. 6d. comprising of the following items.

Parliamentary agents and other expenses  
for the Dock bill, for the River and Harbour

	£1,976	10s.	2d.
Railway Wharf depot	£45	0s.	0d.
Purchase of Rownham Ferry under the authority of the Bristol Dock Act 1865	£10,044	2s.	1d.
Ordinary expenditure including about £400 expended for Masonry and repairs of the banks of the River and about £300 for new iron buckets for dredger	£26,789	13s.	9d.

The Balance in hand on the 30th April was £26,208 13s. 7d.

The Large Transit Shed on the Welsh Back has been for some time past completed, and it has afforded great additional accommodation to the Trade of the Port, two ships from Foreign Parts having discharged their cargoes into it at the same time.

Your committee have the satisfaction to report that the plans for the new locks and also for the river improvement authorized by the Bristol Dock Act 1865, are in such a forward state as will enable the committee very shortly to issue the advertisements for Tenders for the Works. They also report that under the powers of the Act they have completed the purchase of Rownham Ferry from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and their lessees at the sum of £10,000 — of land from Sir Wm Miles at £1,100 and also of Land of the Suspension Bridge Company at £100. They have also agreed with the Society of Merchant Venturers for the purchase of premises necessary for the intended Works at the sum of £10,540 and with the Leigh Woods Company for Land for the sum of £459 7s. 6d. and these purchases will soon be completed.

### 15 October 1866

The Secretary reported that he had received three Tenders in conformity with the terms of such advertisement (i.e. for the proposed Dock Works) vizt.

Mr. Easton Gibbs of Aberdeen	£229,399	0.	0.
Mr. William Tredwell	£184,023	3.	0.
Mr. Rowland Brotherhood	£225,065	0.	0.

Resolved

That the Tender of Mr. William Tredwell be accepted.

### Draft Report of the Docks Committee to the Council

Advertisements were accordingly issued . . . and stating that Tenders would be received . . . on 15th October.

The Specification embraces five divisions of Work, viz. A, B, F, H, K, Division A includes the North Junction Lock between Cumberland Basin and the Floating Harbour; Division B., the new North Entrance Lock between Cumberland basin and the River; Division F, the removal of the Round Point; Division H, the removal of the Banks in front of the Merchants' Quarries; and Division K, the removal of the Banks in front of the Black Rock Quarry. . . .

Your Committee are of opinion that one of the most important branches of the proposed undertaking is comprised in Division B, but this division will also be the most expensive, and therefore, with reference to the late severe monetary Crisis, and the pressure which involved all commercial classes, when the advertisements were published, your Committee felt it would be a prudent precaution not absolutely to commit the Corporation to construct the North Entrance Lock, without further considering whether the completion of this branch of the undertaking would be compatible with the means at the disposal of the Council.

The Specification, therefore, provided that . . . the Corporation might . . . postpone the carrying out of such Works.

Three Tenders only were received . . . viz from Mr. Easton Gibb, of Aberdeen, Mr. Rowland Brotherhood of Chippenham and Mr. William Tredwell of Birmingham . . . and your Committee accepted the Tender of Mr. Tredwell to execute all the Works comprised in the Specification for £184,023 3s. 0d., and if Division B were omitted for £90,571 10s. 0d., including in the latter amount the sum of £4,000 as compensation for omitting Division B.

It is not usual to state the particulars of Tenders by unsuccessful competitors, but your Committee think it right to add that the other Tenders so greatly exceeded Mr. Tredwell's that they felt no hesitation or doubt in concluding an arrangement with him . . . particularly as the approximate estimate made by Mr. Howard, and confirmed by Mr. Harrison, the eminent Hydraulic Engineer, very nearly agreed in amount with Mr. Tredwell's Tender . . .

The works comprised in Division A are to be completed within two years and six months; Division B in three years; Divisions F and K in two years and six months; and Division H within twelve months, from the date of the Engineer's instructions to commence the specified work. . . .

All the funds that have hitherto been required have been provided out of the surplus revenues of the Dock Estate; and a considerable balance is still available for the purchase of property, but it will soon become necessary to borrow money to meet the engagements that have been entered into with the Contractor.

Your Committee therefore recommend that they should be empowered to borrow [up to] £100,000 . . .

Your Committee earnestly trust that it will be found practicable to carry out the proposed scheme in its entirety. . . .

## **17 December 1866**

Read a letter from The Deputy Coroner

Yesterday afternoon I held an Inquest on the body of a man named Thomas Hunt, Engineer of a Steam Tug, who was drowned in Cumberland Basin on Saturday night.

On the Inquiry it transpired that the man was an expert swimmer but that there were no means of escape in the Basin.

It was also stated that two or three winters since a boy fell into the Basin on a very dark night and although he was enabled to keep himself up by swimming for upwards of a quarter an hour, he was at length drowned for want of some means of getting out of the Basin.

At the close of the Inquiry, the Jury appended to their Verdict the following resolution . . . 'The Jury would recommend that chains should be placed round the Basin with Ladders at certain intervals to facilitate the escape of persons falling into Cumberland Basin'.

The Engineer was directed to report on the feasibility of placing some ladders against the walls . . .



# Docks Committee Minute Book Vol.6

## 6 May 1867–13 March 1871

**15 July 1867**

Read a letter from the Clerk of the Local Board of Health Offices 13 Princes Street, 11 July 1867.

The Medical Inspector of the Board reported to the Committee at their Meeting held this day that Typhoid Fever had been extensively spread throughout the District through persons bathing in Water containing Typhoid Sewage and that Men and Boys are in the habit of bathing in the River Avon below Cook's Folly and I was directed to request that you would bring the subject under the notice of the Docks Committee. . . . in order to prevent the practice and that they would put up Notice Boards warning the Public against it. Ordered that a Notice Board be erected.

**29 July 1867**

### The Report of the Docks Committee to Council

Notwithstanding the depression which has more or less pervaded most branches of trade throughout the country, the Committee have the satisfaction to report that there has been a steady increase in the trade of the port, the revenue arising from the Rates on Tonnage and Goods showing an increase of £840 3s. 4d. as compared with the past year; and the Tonnage from Foreign parts an increase of 13,710 Tons.

The Import of Timber has been rather larger than in 1866, though less than it was in 1865 by 16,422 tons. There has also been a larger Import of Grain as well as Sugar, in the present year; the total import of Grain amounting to 77,712 Quarters, and of Sugar to 55,979 tons. On reference to the Tonnage Statistics, it will be seen that 6,356 Tons of the Sugar were brought from France, Holland etc., 3,840 Tons being Raw Sugar and the remainder Refined. The Committee observe a continual increase in the Import of Refined Sugar; in 1865 it amounted to 1,643 Tons; in 1866 to 21,118 Tons; and in 1867 to 2,516 Tons and the quantity is likely to be much larger this year, as 1,820 Tons have arrived since the 30 April.<sup>1</sup>

The total expenditure of the year amounts to £44,802 2s. 8d. comprising the following items, viz:—

Purchase of Land, and costs for the River & Harbour Improvement	£12,765.	9.	2.
Moiety of the Costs of obtaining the Act for the Railway Wharf Depot	£1,953.	17.	1.
Bonds of the Corporation discharged, due 1 and 2 February 1867.	£3,500.	0.	0.
	£18,219.	6.	3.
Ordinary Expenses during the year	£26,582.	16.	9.
The Balance in hand on 30 April last was	£24,602.	12.	9.

Of the £256,399 Bonds of the Corporation issued the 1st May 1860, for the Conversion of the late Dock Company's Promissory Notes £145,799 became due the 1st May 1867, which your Committee have renewed at  $4\frac{1}{2}\%$  per annum.

Your Committee report 'that a Contract for the execution of certain of the New Works of River and Harbour Improvement was concluded with Mr. W. Tredwell in March last, and that they are now in process of being carried out. The details comprised in this contract were fully set forth in the Report to the Council dated 31st October, 1866; but it may be briefly stated that the heaviest Works at present being executed under it are the new Junction Lock to the Floating Harbour, and the Cutting Back of the "Round Point". An important temporary Work necessary to this Contract is that of the tramway to convey the earth excavated from the docks etc., to the Quarries on Durdham Down. This plan of getting rid of the spoil, although no saving whatever to the Dock Works, was thought most desirable by the Committee, in the interests of the Corporation, to adopt, as such an opportunity of filling up these large, void spaces and adding six or seven acres of ground to the Downs would probably never occur again; and there can be no doubt that when completed the enlarged and unbroken area of Down thus secured will be most valuable in perpetuity. The Works of Cutting Off the "Tea and Coffee House Point", let by Contract as a Quarry to Mr. Eaglestaff, and that of the "Suspension Bridge Point", being worked by the Docks Committee, are also proceeding steadily.

<sup>1</sup> This was the beginning of a radical change in Bristol's sugar trade brought about by the development of beet sugar production on the Continent. By the end of the century almost all Bristol's imports of refined sugar would come from Europe and 75% of her imports of unrefined sugar (see D.J. Webb, *The changing industrial geography of the Port and City of Bristol since 1861* unpublished M. Phil. University of London 1967 pp 38-41).

## 5 August 1867

Mr. Howard produced the Memorandum of Agreement signed by himself and Mr. Marmont. . . . .

### Bristol Docks New Works Act 1865

Memorandum of Agreement made between Thomas Howard Engineer to the Corporation and James Marmont Surveyor to the Society of Merchant Venturers.

Thomas Howard undertakes on the part of the Corporation in conjunction with the execution of the new works to increase the width of the entrance to the Merchants Dock<sup>1</sup> so as to make it 50 feet wide and the depth of the said entrance to 20 feet below Float level on condition that the Society shall pay to the Corporation the sum of Twelve Hundred Pounds when the said works shall be completed. . . . .

<sup>1</sup> For the Dock see P.V. McGrath, *The Merchant Venturers of Bristol* pp 345-6.

**12th August 1867**

I estimate that a new Iron Swivel Bridge to be erected in the place of the present "Drawbridge" will cost £2,500.

Thos. Howard. [Adopted]

Copy of John G. Heaven's Letter.

Complaint having been made to the Committee of the Local Board of Health of the smell from the Float near Saint Augustine's Parade and that there are drains discharging into it above the surface of the Water the Surveyor reports that there are 4 drains discharging above the water level and suggests their being carried down below the surface of the Water . . . [Ordered to be done subject to the Engineer's approval]

**9th September 1867**

It was Resolved that the Tender of Messrs. Finch and Heath be accepted.

Bridge Works, Chepstow.

We hereby undertake to execute all the work included in the Contract for the Swivel Bridge . . . for the gross sum of . . . £1,590. 0s. 0d.

**18 November 1867**

To the Chairman and members of the Dock Committee. In complying with your desire that I should furnish you with a report upon the memorial presented to your Committee by the Masters of Steamers trading to this port, relative to the present state of the entrance to River Avon and requesting great facilities to their guidance I am begged to make the following remarks. I think it desirable that buoys be used on the Firefly Rock and on the outer edges of the Plotness, also beacons to be placed on wharf point at high water neap tides and a beacon where the gibbet now stands with a large beacon on Nelson's Point and I deem it also necessary that some alteration should be made in the Avon Light displaying a green shade to the note when abreast of the point, this ray of light of course will be no interference with the Light as it at present stands. I am of the opinion that these changes will have a beneficial effect upon those who will have to navigate the river on night-tides and in thick weather. The buoy on the Plotness will be advantageous to the general trade of the port and on all vessels bound into King road and that from the Firefly Rock to those vessels using Portishead roads. John Drew, Haven Master . . . and thereupon Mr. Drew was directed to put himself into communication with the Trinity Board and to request them to place the buoys and the additional ray of light referred to and with reference to the beacons to request the Engineer to erect such beacons.

**9 December 1867**

P.H. Berham, Trinity House, London E.C. — 6 December 1867.

I am directed to acknowledge receipt of the memorial of the Committee of the Bristol Town Council acting as the Pilotage Board for the Bristol Channel, dated 18th ultimo and urging upon this Corporation the adoption of a system of buoyage described by you as that of Admiral Denham and Captain Bedford R.N.<sup>1</sup> and in reply thereto I am to acquaint you with the information of the memorialist that a well organised system of buoyage, the result of careful enquiry and practical tests to which that of the Bristol Channel is now being assimilated, has now been adopted by the Trinity House and concurred in by the Board of Trade since 1859 and that with regard to the methods stated to have been propounded by Rear Admiral Denham since introduced by Captain Bedford in Scotland and previously used abroad, its main features of black on one side of the Channel and red on the other is regarded as so objectionable from the difficulty of properly distinguishing both colours, that the elder bretheren would not feel justified in encountering its adoption.

<sup>1</sup> Rear Admiral Sir Henry Mangles Denham (1800-1887), employed as a constructor of charts for thirty years, inspector of steam-boat accidents, inventor of jury tiller and patent rowlocks and author of Sailing directions for the British Channel; G. A. Bedford (1809-1879) Captain R.N. 1854 (F. Boase *Modern English Biography* for both).

**16 January 1868**

Alderman Ford, moved and Mr. Jose seconded — that having heard the financial statement now read and finding that the Fund at the disposal of this Committee will provide for the expenditure on contract in respect of Division B. for the new entrance lock and being also convinced that the necessity for such new lock still exists, this Committee is of the opinion that a report recommending the work comprised in Division B. to be carried, be presented to the Council, and the question being put of the Motion the same was carried.

**24 January 1868**

**Report of the Docks Committee to the Council of the City  
of Bristol on the subject of harbour and river improvements.**  
(Calendared)

The Committee advised the Council that since the Council has accepted in principle that the works in Division B are desirable it now has to decide whether the Dock Estate has the financial ability to complete them.

The calculations in the Committee's report to Council of 24 September 1864 suggested that these works could be executed. But the Committee now find that if all the improvements are carried out the cost will be £351,976 rather than the £300,000 allowed for in the Bristol Dock Act of 1865. The new estimate has been revised with

great care by Mr Howard for the works and by Mr. Sturge for the land yet to be purchased. The cost of the New Junction Lock is £103,463 6s. 9d. being £91,294 17s. 6d. for works and £12,168 9s. 3d. for purchasing property. The New Entrance Lock will cost £157,196 6s. 1d. being £116,621 19s. 6d. for works and £40,574 6s. 7d. for purchasing property. River improvements will cost £81,317 0s. 1d. and engineering and other expenses £10,000 making a grand total of £351,976 12s. 11d.

As for the available surplus on Dock revenues there was on 30 April 1867 a credit balance of £24,603. Appendix A sets out a scheme for spreading spending over six years and a calculation of how much can be relied on from surplus revenue and how much will have to be borrowed. It may be safely estimated that the surplus will be £15,500 per year instead of the £13,000 estimated in 1864. £261,999 will need to be borrowed at 4½%. By 1872 there should still be a surplus revenue of £3,510 after paying the interest on this newly borrowed £261,999.

It must be observed that if Division B was abandoned there would not be a saving of £157,196. £4,000 would have to be deducted as a penalty due to the contractor and for other expenses incurred in land purchase about £15,000 would also have to be deducted. Also the entrance to Cumberland basin would have to be improved by cutting off projections and by an alteration to Brunel's lock of such an extent as to amount to its reconstruction which the Engineer judges undesirable (Appendix B).

The works in progress are going on satisfactorily. Notices have been given to treat for the land needed for the new Wharf Depot and Harbour Railway.

### Appendix A.

#### Estimated Annual Expenditure.

Year beginning	30.4.	1867	£15,347	
"	"	"	1868	£37,826
"	"	"	1869	£114,910
"	"	"	1870	£81,485
"	"	"	1871	£81,485
"	"	"	1872	£22,123

Total		<hr/>	
			£353,176

Less amount to be paid by Society  
of Merchant Venturers, for  
alterations to their dock.

£1,200
<hr/>
£351,976

---

 Estimated Provision for Each Year's Expenditure
 

---

	Interest at 4½% on monies borrowed	Surplus Revenue	Available Surplus after paying interest	Required to Borrow	Total Amount Borrowed
1867	Nil	24603	24603	Nil	—
1868	791	15500	39312	Nil	50950
1869	2293	15500	14693	49267	100217
1870	4510	15500	10990	70495	170712
1871	7682	15500	7818	73667	244379
1872	10997	15000	4503	17620	261999

---

Leaving £15,000 Annual Surplus to meet £11,790 interest on £261,999, at 4½%.

## Appendix B.

To the Chairman and Committee, Bristol Docks:

1. As to the present condition of Brunel's Lock and Gates.

The masonry of this Lock was never of first-rate character as to workmanship but so far as regards stability I think the Lock Chamber may be fully relied on: its inverted form gives it great strength; though of a very inconvenient character for locking vessels. The Wing Wall below the Lock, has shown many signs of settlement. . . .

With regard to the Iron Caissoon Gates of this Lock, although they are inconvenient in arrangement for locking and heavy to work, they may be considered strong enough for some years to sustain the pressure of water against them. . . .

2. As to the substitution of pointing gates for the Caissoons and other alterations to this lock.

It will be seen . . . what it would be a very expensive course, amounting almost to re-construction, to attempt any great alterations in this work.

3. As to the inconvenience or obstruction which may be caused to the trade of the port during the time the North Lock is stopped.

It will be impossible to carry out the New Works without working the trade for a time through the South Lock (Brunel's) and this period should not be estimated at less than 18 months. To facilitate this, a small Steam Tug should be engaged, as required, at tide-time, to assist vessels having no steam power; and additional mooring posts should also be fixed on the banks of the river at Rownham. With such additional assistance, and seeing what is done at a single entrance at many other Ports —

that during the construction of Brunel's Lock the whole trade was done for about four years through the North Lock alone; and that more recently, during stoppages at the North Lock for repair, the work has been safely done through Brunel's Lock — I should not consider these an insurmountable obstacle to the construction of a new Lock.

4. Length of the proposed New Locks.

These Locks have not been designed of the great length of 350 feet with the object of getting a class of steamers of the largest dimensions; but seeing that to make an entrance forming a better angle with the axis of the river a certain channel between the river and the Cumberland Basin must be cut through and walled, advantage is taken of this necessity, and the Gates so placed, as to give a lock of considerable length.

This will enable several vessels, according to their size to be locked in at once.

The objects which have been . . . kept in view . . . have been.

1. To afford greater dispatch to the trade.
  2. An extension of the available duration of the trade.
  3. To make the entrance from the river and the departure from the basin at a more convenient and safe angle for either large steamers or ships.
5. Capacity of the Floating Harbour for large vessels.

Although the proposed works have not been designed with the expectation of getting into the Floating Harbour the 'largest class of Ocean-going Steamers', it will be seen that they are of sufficient capacity to admit any large vessels which may be brought here.

## 10 February 1868

The Council at their meeting held on the 4th February instant resolved that the report from the Docks Committee be received and adopted and the Works comprised in Division B. be executed under the existing Contract with Mr. Tredwell.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This may be William Tredwell of Grenville Place, contractor, who appears in *Mathews's Bristol Directory*, 1869.

## 15 June 1868

Read a letter from certain parties interested in the recreation of Angling in the River Avon praying the Committee to grant them the right of preserving and fishing the river, and the Secretary was directed to inform the parties that at present the Committee could not accede to their request.

## 27 July 1868

### The Report of the Docks Committee to Council

The Import of Sugar during the past year has been unusually small, being only 44,907 against 55,979 tons in 1867, thereby causing a

decrease in the Revenue of upwards of £1,500 as compared with the preceding year; but notwithstanding this serious falling off in one of the principal articles of import, the Committee are happy to report an increase in the Receipts of the year for Tonnage, and Goods of £721. 17s. 9d. and of 14,788 Tons. in the Tonnage from Foreign Ports.

The total expenditure of the year amounts to £49,545 17s. 1d., comprising the following items

Ordinary expenses	£29,144	1	7
Expended out of the surplus Revenue for River and Harbour Improvement	£20,401	15	6
	£49,545	17	1d

The Balance in hand on 30 April 1868 was £20,007 14s. 4d.

The total amount expended for River and Harbour Improvement during the past year was £36,351 15s. 6d., and that of the £50,950 raised on the Bonds of the Corporation, £35,000 has been invested in the 3 per cent Consols and still remains available for Expenditure on these Works.

During the past year the sum of £1,266 6s. 3d. has been expended on the extension of the Mardyke Wharf, thus affording more Quay accommodation for the increasing Trade of the Port.

Considerable progress has been made in the new Junction Lock, between the Floating Harbour and Cumberland Basin.

The ground is being cleared at the lower end for the construction of the New Entrance Lock, and the contractor will probably commence this work in the course of two or three weeks. The widening of the River at Hotwell House will also be shortly commenced at the "Round Point" the greater part of the work of setting back the road and forming the new lines of River Walling is done; the excavation of the Rock outside the new River Wall will proceed more rapidly as the demand for Stone for the Construction of the new Lock increases.

The long projecting bank in front of the Merchants' Quarries is being rapidly removed, and the excavated material deposited in the Down Quarries.

The improvement of other parts of the River is also being proceeded with as fast as special circumstances, arising from difficulties in the disposal of the material, and other causes, will allow.

The Works for the Harbour Railway and Wharf Depot will shortly be commenced. The Contract for the Railway, which is to be made jointly by the Great Western and Bristol and Exeter Railway Companies, has been let; the greater part of the property for the Wharf has been purchased, and the works for that part of the New Quay which lies below Prince Street Bridge are about to be let by contract, and at once carried out.

The upper part above Prince Street Bridge will also be ready for the Completion of the Railway.

The Council having, at their meeting on the 9th November 1866, authorised your Committee to borrow £100,000 for the purposes of the New Works under the powers of The Bristol Dock Act, 1865 your



Committee recommend that they should be empowered from time to time to borrow such further sums not exceeding the Amount Authorised to be raised by the said Act at such rate of interest and with such stipulations and arrangements as they may think expedient.

#### **14 September 1868**

Captain Drew, the Haven Master, was directed to inform the Pilots . . . that the Committee will consider very seriously any future complaints . . . of injury occasioned to large Steamers navigating the river and in every . . . case of injury . . . the Pilot . . . will be required to explain his conduct to the Committee, under the penalty of suspension or dismissal if the explanation does not prove satisfactory.

#### **16 November 1868**

Letter from Mr Moore, Secretary of the Joint Committee of the Bristol Harbour Railway . . . Bristol 31 October 1868. (Calendared)

The extent of land to be taken under the 1866 Act is inadequate. Application by a further parliamentary bill for further power to take land for the Wharf Depot is being sought. The co-operation of the Committee is requested. Also provision in the bill is to be made, by arrangement with the Corporation, for laying tramways at Bathurst Bain, diverting roads no 16 and 25 Bedminster, permitting more than one line of rails on the crossing of Princes Street Road and removing the restriction against passenger traffic over the railway (Committee ask for a copy of the proposed bill).

#### **28 December 1868**

Read a letter from Mr. W.M. Gibson.

I beg to call your attention . . . to the danger in which Passengers by the various Ferries are placed in consequence of what appears to me to be neglect on the part of the men in charge of the small Tugs working on the Float. On Wednesday last I was crossing from the Welch Back to the Redcliff side and on putting out from the Slip we found ourselves close under the bows of one of these Tugs but which was fortunately seen in time to avoid such a collision as would undoubtedly have sunk the Ferry Boat. [He asks Committee to get Masters of Steam Tugs to sound their whistles when approaching the Ferries. The Committee directs the Water Bailiff to see this is done.]

#### **8 February 1869**

Application from Mr James Bawn, the Crane Master.  
Gentlemen,

Having been required by you to superintend the opening and closing the Transit Sheds on the Quays and Welsh Back, I commenced doing so on the 1 November 1864 and still do the same in addition to my official duties as Crane Master. The sheds erected

have been found considerably to facilitate the Steam and other Vessels having Customable Goods such as Brandy, Wine, Fruit and other mixed general Cargoes, thus enabling the Owners to deposit the said Goods, and the Steamers etc to proceed without delay to make additional Voyages, but for the Sheds it would not have been possible for them so to have done, thereby benefitting to a very large extent in this respect the Trade of the Port.

The Sheds on many occasions have to be opened at 6 o'clock A.M. till 8 o'clock P.M. They also require constant looking after to be kept clean and fit for use.

I am now in my 32nd year of Office as Crane Master and therefore throw myself on your kind consideration to recommend me for this additional duty an increase of Salary . . .

Since the Sheds have been erected 205 Steam and 126 Sailing Vessels have discharged their Cargoes therein.

[Committee agreed to recommend £25 p.a. increase in salary.]

### **5 April 1869**

Read a Certificate from Mr Howard.

I beg to report that we have during the past week completed measurements of the works done under Mr. Tredwell's Contract since the 9th January last and I have to recommend a payment to him of Ten Thousand pounds on account.

This amount includes 75 per cent of the Contract sum for Coffey Dam No 1 which after full consideration I think the Committee may now venture to pay. By such recommendation I do not however accept the Dam as a perfectly reliable and satisfactory work and the Contractor is informed of and understands his position in regard to it.

The Dam may now I consider be reckoned on as sufficiently strong on the inside to withstand the water pressure; precautions will also be taken to maintain such additional support as can be given by timber struts during the progress of the work and the Masonry at the end of the Lock must be carefully carried out in suitable lengths. The original faulty construction of the Dam may however still give some trouble from leakage, which will have to be kept under by sufficient pumping power but this is a point of minor importance compared with that which has hitherto been in question, viz. the main strength of the Dam.

### **10 May 1869**

Read a letter from Messrs Brice and Burges.

Council House 8 May 1869.

Sir,

Bristol Harbour Railway.<sup>1</sup>

We have to report . . . that the provisions in this Bill to enable the Great Western and Bristol and Exeter Railway Companies to purchase additional land to expand the wharf Depot now in the course of construction have been omitted on the opposition of The

Bristol and North Somerset Railway Company who have prior compulsory powers over the land referred to . . .

The clauses that now remain in it and that interest the Docks Board are as follows.

1. That notwithstanding the extension of time given for the completion of the Railway, the Rent of £2,000 per annum, payable by the Companies to the Corporation shall commence as provided by the Act of 1866 on and from the 28 June 1871 provided the Wharf shall then be completed and fit for use.
2. That the Tramways to be laid by the Companies round the Quays of Bathurst basin shall be under the control of the Corporation who may remove such Tramways if they shall be found useless or inconvenient.
3. That on the requisition of the Local Board the Companies shall erect a Bridge for Foot-Passengers over Prince Street Bridge Road, where the Railway will cross that Road on the level.

#### Midland Railway Bill<sup>2</sup>

A Clause has been added to this Bill which requires that the widening of the Bridge over the Floating Harbour near the Feeder shall be done to the reasonable satisfaction of the Docks Engineer.

<sup>1</sup> This became 32 & 33 Vict. cap. lxxiii An Act to confer further powers upon the Great Western and the Bristol and Exeter Railway Companies with respect to the Bristol Harbour Railway and Depot.

<sup>2</sup> This became 32 & 33 Vict. cap. lxxxiii.

### 3 August 1869

### Report of the Docks Committee to Council

The total expenditure of the year including

£2,235 9s. 2d. for interest on Dock Mortgages for the River and Harbour Improvement	£29,147	1.	2.
Extension of Mardyke Wharf.	£1,407	5.	5.
N.B. £1,266 6s. 3d. of the above amount was expended in the year ending 30 April 1868, and included in the balance of £20,007 14s. 4d.			
River and Harbour Improvement	£63,869	12.	5d.
Railway Wharf Depot	£14,850.	12.	6.

---

£109,274 11. 6.

The balance in hand on the 30 April last was £10,060 10s. 5d., after expending £25,560 4s. 11d. out of the Surplus Revenue for the River and Harbour Improvement.

During the past year £3,160 was raised on the Bonds of the Corporation for the River and Harbour Improvement, and likewise £50,000 authorised to be raised for the Railway Wharf Depot, which the Committee succeeded in borrowing at 4 per cent per annum.

It will be in the recollection of the Council that the Committee reported having invested £35,000 on the Three per Cent consols, the

sale of which produced £34,108 19s. 10d. besides the Dividends amounting to £2,163 5s. 2d.

Notwithstanding the depression which has prevailed in most branches of Trade since the financial crisis in 1867 the Committee are happy to report an increase in the Revenue, the Receipts for Tonnage being £21,033 13s. 10d. against £20,791 8s. 3d. in 1868, and for Goods £10,649 12s. 5d. against £10,002 13s. 9d. in 1868, showing a difference in favour of 1869 of £889. 4s. 3d., and an increase of 8,779 Tons in the Tonnage from Foreign parts.

Your Committee have much pleasure in reporting an increase of 5,565 Tons in the Import of Sugar, the Tonnage in this year being 50,472 Tons against 44,907 Tons in 1868.

The Engineer Reports as follows. The New Junction Lock between Cumberland Basin and the Floating Harbour is well advanced. A delay for which the Contractor is responsible has hindered the progress of the lower end, but means are now being taken to provide for this difficulty. It is fully expected that this lock will be open for traffic next summer.

At the outer Lock communicating with the River, the property has been purchased and the ground cleared, the outer Coffor Dam is complete and a considerable part of the excavation made. The river walls approaching the Lock, a work of much difficulty, are in progress and the works here generally are going on satisfactorily.

The Works in the river are proceeding as fast as circumstances will at present admit. The requirements of the Shipping neccessitate great care so that the works in hand shall not obstruct the navigation, and this makes the progress somewhat tedious.

The filling up of one of the Downs Quarries is now pretty well complete; and a considerable area of land has been thus made available.

### **Railway Wharf Depot.**

In this important work the whole of the property is purchased and apportioned between the Corporation and the Railway Companies. The Masonry of the Quay Wall of the lower Wharf, below Prince Street Bridge, is approaching completion, and the upper Wharf and the Terminus is also proceeding well.

**13 September 1869**

(Calendared)

Report from the Sub-Committee considering the application of Messrs Wm. Smith & Co.<sup>1</sup> for special accommodation for an intended line of Mediterranean Steamers.

The best plan is to enclose the large shed between the mud docks dividing it into three compartments. This will provide a suitable berth of about the right length (210ft) for the expected line of steamers. No exclusive use of this should be granted. This would be detrimental to the increasing trade of the port.

<sup>1</sup> William Smith & Co of 10 Corn Street were merchants dealing in oil, tallow and general produce (*Mathew's Bristol Directory*, 1869).

## **27 September 1869**

William Smith & Co. to Chairman and Committee (Calendared)

A line of bi-monthly Steamers carrying about 600 tons of cargo and of a size suitable for the Floating Harbour has been established to ply between Bristol and the Mediterranean which, it is hoped, will benefit Bristol's commerce and swell the port's dues. Immediate results are not expected. Experience at Liverpool, London and Glasgow shows this. But perseverance succeeds at last as results at these ports demonstrates. To work our line, so severe is competition over freight rates, so heavy is the daily cost of well appointed steamers and so necessary is it to secure a quick turn round in port that the absolute certainty of a transit shed is vital. Otherwise the line will succumb. (The Committee adhered to the Sub-Committee's recommendation not to grant exclusive use of shed accommodation.)

## **15 November 1869**

### **Estimate of New Works, January 24 1868 with account of Expenditure to October 30 1869.**

The foregoing statement of Estimate and Expenditure will explain itself but some reference to the details of cost, present position and future progress of the works may be desired.

## **New Junction Lock**

In this division about  $\frac{3}{4}$ ths of the money is expended. The property is all purchased, but some Rents of Property for which the Corporation are liable and other compensations have brought the payments somewhat above the Estimate.

The greater part of the masonry of this Lock is done. The lower part of the Lock is however behind owing to the defective construction of the Coffor Dam in the Basin, and the necessity there has been to retain the shank of earth between the Basin and the new Lock so that the tide might not break into the Floating Harbour in case of accident to the Dam. Before this earth shank can be prudently removed I have thought it necessary to erect the Tidal Gates in this Lock. These are now nearly ready and will be very shortly put up.

The two upper pairs of gates for this Lock are of Timber and are under hand in our own yard. The lower pair which is proposed to be of iron will be further reported on hereafter. There also remains the Swivel Bridge for this Lock the designs for which are in hand. These works with the proportion of the cost of the Hydraulic Machinery are now the heaviest part of the outlay remaining on this Lock.

In this division the Culvert which drains the Society of Merchants Graving Docks and for which we have to provide has been a source of considerable and unexpected difficulty owing to its having been found

	Works together with Parliamentary and Law Expenses			Property			Total		
New Junction Lock	£ 91,294	17	6	£12,168	9	3	£103,463	6	9
Expended to 30 Oct 1869	£ 45,766	13	3	£13,058	12	6	£ 58,825	5	9
	Remainder						£ 44,638	1	0
New Entrance Lock	£116,621	19	6	£40,574	6	7	£157,196	6	1
Expended to 30 Oct 1869	£ 14,230	16	7	£40,801	12	11	£ 55,032	9	6
	Remainder						£102,163	16	7
River Improvements	£ 74,190	7	3	£ 7,126	12	10	£ 81,317	0	1
Expended to 30 Oct 1869	£ 15,612	6	9	£ 6,580	2	7	£ 22,192	9	4
	Remainder						£ 59,124	10	9
Engineering and other Expenses				Expended to 30 Oct 1869			£ 2,478	0	0
				Remainder			£ 7,522	0	0
	Total Estimate January 1868						£351,976	12	11
	Total Expenditure to 30 Oct 1869						£138,528	4	7
	Remainder						£213,448	8	4

in a different line and at a higher level in Cumberland Basin than what was shewn in the Society's plans . . .

It will also be in the recollection of the Committee that as reported some time since in consequence of Springs of Water having been found in the gravel at the depth required for the excavations for this Lock additional work would be required to ensure safety from upward pressure on the Inverts and Gate Sills etc. The thickness of the brick inverts have consequently been increased and the concrete foundations for the Sills have been carried through the gravel to the rock below. These additions will add somewhat to the estimated cost, but on the other hand I have without reducing its strength made some variations in parts of the work which will lessen the cost, so that the final result will probably not differ much from the estimate.

## **2 The new Entrance Lock**

The dam at the river end has been for some time complete and after shewing a considerable defect at one time is now I trust safe. The greater part of the excavation for the Lock is made and considerable lengths of the lower parts of the walls built. The measures taken for stopping the slip of the earth adjoining Mr Jones' Property at the foot of Granby Hill have been so far successful. This difficulty has necessitated a different mode of constructing the lock from that which we adopted at the upper work and making it advisable to put in the foundations in short lengths in tranches instead of opening out a large face of the bank at once. About 230 feet on the north side and 190 feet on the south side of the foundations are thus got in and we are working immediately in front of Mr. Jones's Offices. Some parts of the River Wall and of the outer pier Wall are also built.

According to our present arrangements for the work, it will be necessary to stop the North Lock about the beginning of February next so that the Dams at the lower end of the Lock may be made. The larger Dam at the lower end of the Basin will be delayed so as to have the two Dams at once in the Basin for as short a time as possible. This lower Basin Dam will be begun in the Summer and finished in the Autumn.

[Similar Springs though stronger are to be found here. The measures described above have been taken.]

As regards the time when these works will be completed and available I believe . . . will be [for the Upper Lock] September next and [for the Lower Lock] Autumn of 1871.

## **3 River Improvements**

. . . it has been necessary to proceed with much caution both to avoid causing obstructions to the navigation and the difficulty there is in maintaining the desired form of the banks after the work has been done, the mud silting up in many cases almost as fast as new excavations are made. The main object . . . is to be able to get away the rock which lies below the water and in the way of the proposed

Channel . . .

We have as yet done little to this but next Summer I hope we shall clear away all the rock at the Suspension Bridge and the Round Point. After the rock is once got away we shall be able to do much work with the Dredging Engine. At the 'Tea and Coffee House Point' we have considerable difficulty owing to the slipping of the rock from above, there are some thin seams of clay among the strata here and as the dip inclines towards our work it will be necessary to go back farther with our cutting.

The cutting at the back of the 'Hotwell House point' is commenced and we find the stone of great use in the masonry, that at the Round Point turning out very indifferently.

The work on the opposite bank of the River below the New Inn is not yet begun . . .

The work at 'Pheasant Quarry Point' is all in abeyance owing to the working of the Black Rock Quarry by the Board of Health.

### **13 December 1869**

The Engineer reported that he had been making enquiry as to the supply of Gas to Transit Sheds and he was directed to obtain Tenders for Fittings etc.

### **20 December 1869**

The Committee then took into consideration a proposal to remove the Offices of the Committee from the present house to Premises belonging to Messrs. Grace in Queen Square.

The Committee took into consideration Tenders for the New Dock Gates and thereupon the Tender of Messrs. H.H. Maudslay & Co. at the sum of £2570 18s. 10d. was accepted.

### **10 January 1879**

#### **Reports of the Clerks and the Engineer on the Bristol Port and Channel Dock bill, 1870 (Calendared)**

The Clerks advised that in their present form the mortgages to be made under the bill would take precedence of all future mortgages that may be granted by the Corporation. The Docks Committee should ascertain that these mortgages do not prejudice the powers already possessed to raise the balance still unborrowed of the £230,000 allowed in the Bristol Dock Act 1865 or the further sum of £51,976 required to complete the works as reported to the Council on 24 January 1868. The mortgages referred to arise from the clauses in the bill enabling the Corporation to borrow up to £100,000 and to subscribe up to this amount to the Port and Channel Dock Co.

The Engineer reported that section 4 of the Co.'s bill gave it power to stop up the North Channel which has been silting up in recent years while the Swash channel has been deepening. He saw no objection to this. It would be better to have one adequate and



properly trained entrance to the river than two irregular entrances. But one condition should be made: the faces of the embankment at either end should be faced with stone strong enough to keep the surplus soil likely to be deposited by the Co. in the North Channel in its place rather than being washed into the river.

The Co. must be required as in the 1864 Act to maintain the low water channel in its present course and avoid the danger of diverting the Avon's ebb tide to the Somerset side by the dumping of excavated soil from its Dock. A public road and landing should be kept between the river and roadstead and the public road and railway communicating with Bristol so that the advantage enjoyed by shipping frequenting the port will not be reduced by the works of the new Co.

#### **14 January 1870**

Decisions of the specially summoned Committee on the Bristol Port and Channel Dock bill, 1870 (Calendared)

No objection to section 4 concerning the North Channel provided the Engineer's requirements were met. No opinion was expressed on the clause empowering the Corporation to subscribe £100,000. By 9 votes to 4 (C.J. Thomas and Mr Taylor declining to vote) an amendment was carried to a motion maintaining that if the Corporation decided to subscribe the Committee did not object to the means proposed for raising the £100,000. The amendment declared that the Committee *did* object to the Corporation being given power to apply surplus Dock revenues or money borrowed on mortgage of the Dock estate for paying interest or principal due on such a subscription. As long as section 67 in the 1864 Act was maintained the agreement about Dunball island was unobjectionable.

#### **31 January 1870**

Read a letter from Richard Rowe Shirehampton Telegraph

I am directed to inform you that the charge for Day and Night Service between Shirehampton and Cumberland Basin will be 21/- per week for as long as you may require the same — The Service at Cumberland Basin being done by your Board (Committee accepted this).

Letter from Mr. Henry Hibbard

Bath 21 March

Having contracted to build a new Gas Tank for the Bristol United Gas Co.<sup>1</sup> the earth excavated from which has to be removed by Barges, I ask your permission to erect a temporary stage in front of the Gas Company's premises at Canon's Marsh . . . at which Barges can be moored. (Agreed subject to Engineer's approval of work).

<sup>1</sup> The two rival gas companies which supplied Bristol's earliest gas lighting had amalgamated in 1863. For the early history of gas, see Helen Seal, *The Gas Industry in Bristol, 1815-53* (B.A. Dissertation, University of Bristol, 1975).

**11 July 1870**

Read Engineer's Report and he was authorised . . . to order one of Brown's Patent Travelling Steam Cranes at a cost of about £550.

Letter from the Collector of Customs W.J. Kedpath, Custom House, Bristol.

With reference to the "Petroleum Acts 1862 and 1863" I beg to inform you that the undermentioned Vessels have arrived at this Port and reported Cargo as follows

**Petroleum**

*Phoenix* 1069 barrels lying at Redcliff Wharf; *Ansdell* 1510 barrels lying at Grove

(Harbour Master informed)

Letter from the Vicar, Churchwardens and Inhabitants of St. Georges complaining of the evils occasioned by the Sunday Traffic allowed on the Feeder by the opening of the Locks to Watermen and pleasure boats on that day. The Secretary was directed to inform the Memorialists that the Committee regretted that they had no power to interfere.

**17 July 1870****Report of the Docks Committee to Council**

Your Committee have much pleasure in reporting that there has been a decided improvement in the Trade of the Port during the present year, as will appear on reference to the accompanying Tonnage Statistics. The Revenue arising from the Receipts for Tonnage being, for 1870 £24,211 7s. 1d. against £21,033 13s. 10d. in 1869, and for Goods, £13,214 13s. 9d. against £10,649 12s. 5d. in 1869, shewing an increase in the present year of £5,742 14s. 7d. against £889 4s. 3d. in 1869. The increase in the Tonnage from Foreign parts has been equally satisfactory, the aggregate of the year being 355,921 Tons against 290,963 Tons in 1869, shewing an increase in 1870 of 64,958 Tons against 8,779 Tons in 1869.

The total Expenditure of the Year amounts to £89,181 15s. 9d. comprising the following items viz:-

Ordinary Expenditure of the Year

including £2,811 6s. 8d. for Interest on Dock.

Mortgages for the River and Harbour

Improvement.

£30,985 17. 11.

River and Harbour Improvement.

£48,765 14. 4.

Railway Wharf Depot.

£ 9,430 3. 6.

---

£89,181 15. 9.

The Balance in hand on the 30 April last was £21,148 11s. 6d., after expending £9,820 16s. 6d. out of the Surplus Revenue for the River and Harbour Improvement.

During the year your Committee have raised on the Bonds of the

Corporation the sum of £36,442 at the rate of Four per cent per Annum Interest, for the Works now in progress for River and Harbour Improvement.

### **Report of the Engineer of the Bristol City Docks.**

The Works of the new Junction Lock, between Cumberland Basin and the Floating Harbour, are drawing towards completion — the Masonry is built, with the exception of the lower part, — the Hydraulic Machinery is all in hand, — one pair of Lock Gates is, and another is now being, erected in place, — the third pair being in a forward state. At present there is every reason to anticipate that this Lock will be opened for the trade before the end of the current year.

The Masonry of the New Entrance Lock, leading from the Basin into the River, is also well advanced. The whole of the North Wall is built to within 16 feet of coping, so that the danger to adjoining property, from earth slips, is in great measure removed. The South Wall is also nearly completed, and it is hoped that this Lock may be finished during the next year.

The Works of the River Improvement, and removal of the Rock at the several points, are progressing as well as the nature of the work, the disposal of the excavated material, and the necessity of keeping the Channel of the River clear for Navigation, will permit.

The Works of the Harbour Railway and Wharf Depot are also well advanced. The Quay Wall above Prince's Street Bridge is now being built: the Wall below the Bridge is finished, and forms a very important addition to the Wharfage of the Port. The Railway portion of the undertaking is now proceeding rapidly, and it is hoped that the communication between the Floating Harbour and the Railway may be made by about the end of the year.

18 July 1870

Thomas Howard.

### **22 August 1870**

The Committee took into consideration the Report of the Engineer presented at the last meeting with reference to the works of the Channel Dock Company as affecting the Swash Channel and the Committee who viewed the place last week having stated their views . . . the Engineer was directed to write to Mr. Brunlees the Chief Engineer of the Channel Docks Company drawing his attention to the serious obstruction to the Channel likely to arise by a continuance of a deposit of excavated material at the place referred to.

### **24 October 1870**

Letter from Messrs. Gerrish and Sainsbury, Queen Sq., Bristol.<sup>1</sup>

We have great complaints to make . . . of the dirty state of the Feeder which will cease to be navigable if allowed to fill up with mud as it is at the present time.

Large Coal Steamers are often passed into the Cut and cannot get alongside any Wharf from the want of sufficient depth of water and the whole of the Bath and other trade is kept waiting for 4 or 5 hours at a time and cannot proceed which of course must be put a stop to as the Bristol Dock Acts specially provides for delays of this kind.

<sup>1</sup> Described in Directories of the time as 'wharfingers'.

## 21 November 1870

Letter from J.G. Heaven, Clerk to the Local Board of Health.

It having been referred to a Sub-Committee of the local Board of Health to consider and report on the best means for freeing Prince Street, Bridge from tolls, I am directed to request from your information as to the amount of tolls received by you and the expenses of repair, maintenance and management, yearly of the Bridge and on what terms you would be willing that the tolls should be abolished and the Bridge thrown open to the public.

## 28 November, 1870

The Secretary presented the following Return  
Prince Street Bridge

The Average Gross receipts collected for Tolls  
for 10 years from 1861 to 1870

£284 0s. 6d.

Cost of Collection viz:

Toll Keeper 20/- per week. £52

Assistant 12/- £31 4s. £83 4s. 0d.

£200 16s. 6d.

The Average cost of Repairs for the same period  
amounted to £31 10s.

The Taxes on the Bridge and road leading  
thereto amount to per annum £21

£52 10s.

£148 6s. 6d.

[Consideration deferred]

## 5 December 1870

The Committee took into further consideration the question of abolishing the Carriage Tolls at Prince Street Bridge and after a long discussion It was Resolved unanimously That the Committee does not feel itself at present in a position to give an answer to the Sub-Committee of the Local Board of Health in respect to their question on what terms they could advise the abolition of the existing Horse and Carriage Tolls over Prince Street Bridge.

## 19 December 1870

Letter from the Coroner, H.S. Wasbrough, Corn Street, Bristol.

This morning I held an Inquest on the Steward of the Barque *Monsoon* who was drowned in Cumberland Basin on Monday night by falling between the *Juno* steamer and the Quay wall in attempting to go ashore. Had Life Hooks been at hand it is more than possible he might have been saved, but before the Hooks could be obtained from the Bridge at the end of the Basin the poor man had sunk and several minutes before the body was recovered [*sic*] In returning their Verdict the Jury suggested, that in addition to the Hooks kept on the Bridges at either end, a Life Hook should also be kept about the centre of the Basin.

[Dockmaster ordered to do this]

### **31 December 1870**

Letter from Mr. F.F. Fox.<sup>1</sup>

I . . . have since been informed by Mr. Howard of your wish that my application for land in your property at the Feeder Farm should be changed to a more isolated site.

Mr. Howard also requested me to indicate the spot where the proposed stores for spirits of Petroleum would be erected on the said site, to furnish a plan of the said Buildings and to state the probable cost of them. I beg accordingly to change my application for land to the site shewn by Mr. Howard . . .

The proposed stores . . . are shewn upon the accompanying plans. They will be erected upon the surface of the ground and will consist of double arches with an intervening air space and will be covered by three feet of earth.

With the help of ice the temperature will be kept down to a point which will prevent evaporation even during the hottest summer. The entrance will be protected by iron doors and each arch will be lit from above by an arrangement which admits the illuminating but none of the heating properties of light. The cost will be at least two thousand pounds . . .

So secure from fire do I regard the buildings that it is my present intention not to incur the expense of insurance. [Referred to Engineer]

The Engineer was directed to take all necessary measures to keep the navigation open in the Floating Harbour during the present frost.

<sup>1</sup> Described in the Directories of the time as an oil and colour merchant and drysalter of Little George St. Frome Bridge.

### **9 January 1871**

### **Report of the Engineer on parliamentary bills affecting the Docks (Calendared)**

The Midland Railway bill<sup>1</sup> simply extends the time for widening the railway bridge over the Float at St. Philips. No objection to section 4 of the Bristol and Exeter Railway bill<sup>2</sup> (Session 1871) providing for widening the bridge over Dock Rd. The design should be adapted to the present bridge. Section 5 is important as it provides for taking

additional lands adjoining the Float to increase the Railway Depot. Any work which interferes with the water frontage should be carried out in accordance with the agreement of 20 October 1864 between the Corporation and N. Somerset Railway Co. and a clause should be inserted providing that no interference with the Harbour should be made without the Corporation's consent. The Bristol Street Tramways and G.W. and Midland Railway Cos. bills do not affect the Docks.

The Bristol and Portishead Pier and Railway (Portishead Docks) bill<sup>3</sup> seeks to make a Floating Dock at Portishead Pill. No works directly affect the Docks. Provision is made for paying the Corporation the same proportion of dues as in the Channel Docks Act 1864. Sections 62 and 64 of the Portishead Pier Act 1866 should be inserted to guard against deposit of excavated material in the tideway. The most important provision is the power given to the Corporation to subscribe not less than £100,000 on the security of the Portishead estate or the Dock estate or Borough Fund.

The objects of the Bristol and Channel Dock<sup>4</sup> (Session 1871) bill are to extend by 2 years the time for completing the works and more importantly to allow the Corporation to subscribe £100,000 on the security of the Dock revenue, Wharfage dues, Borough Rates and property of the Corporation. If the Corporation subscribes provision is made for two Corporation appointed Directors to join the existing 12 Directors.

The Engineer refrained from commenting on how these bills may affect the financial interest of the Dock Estate but he again pointed out the more important works needed to maintain and improve it. These are a Steam Boat Landing Stage and a Slip for cattle in the river below the new Entrance Lock; the conversion into Public Graving Docks of one or both of the two Locks which will become redundant at Cumberland basin; increased Wharfage and Quay accommodation; walls instead of mud banks for the Float and the Feeder; the lengthening of the mud docks on the Grove; a Quay at St. Augustine's Butts and the very important question of the regulation of the river below Rownham. Most of these have been recognized as necessary by the Committee but postponed for lack of funds.

The urgent necessity of improving the Docks is apparent from observing the increased Dock accommodation being provided on the Severn and Bristol Channel. The lack of a large mineral or manufacturing district here means that trade cannot attain the unlimited expansion which these advantages confer on other ports. Either of the Docks under consideration must provide keen competition for every class of vessel that now comes up to Bristol. Being newly laid out they will have advantages for some branches of trade over the older works here. Also it is the apparent policy of the Midland Railway to work their large traffic entirely through the Channel Dock to the obvious injury of the Corporation Docks.

**The Committee's consideration of the Portishead Dock bill**

It was then moved by Mr. Charles Nash That in the opinion of this Committee the time for considering the question of contributing to this Scheme had not yet arrived.

Whereupon it was proposed as an Amendment by Mr. Hellicar That this Committee acting as Trustees of the Bristol Dock Estate do not express an opinion on the policy of Clause 2 of the Bill which empowers the Corporation to subscribe £100,000 towards the undertaking.

And the Question having been put on the Amendment the votes for and against the same were equal. And the Question being then put on the original motion the same was carried by a majority.

In relation to the Bristol Port and Channel Dock Bill It was moved by Mr. Charles Nash That considering the great importance of speedily providing Docks for the large class of Ships which Bristol is at present unable to accommodate this Committee is of opinion that it is desirable to aid the Channel Dock undertaking by a subscription to be raised on the security of the Bristol Dock Surplus but that such contribution shall rank after the sum of £230,000 now being expended under the powers of the Bristol Dock Act 1865 as well as the sum of £51,976 or any part thereof required to complete the River and Harbour Improvement. [Carried by a majority].

Resolved that these Resolutions with the Report of the Engineer be forwarded to the Parliamentary Bills Committee.

<sup>1</sup> This became 34 & 35 Vict. cap. lxxxvi.

<sup>2</sup> This became 34 and 35 Vict. cap .ci.

<sup>3</sup> This became 34 and 35 Vict. cap. cxlii An Act to authorize the Bristol and Portishead Pier and Railway Co. to construct Docks at Portishead and to amend and enlarge the existing Acts relaing to the Company.

<sup>4</sup> This became 34 and 35 Vict. cap. clvi An Act to empower the Corporation of Bristol to subscribe to the undertaking of the Bristol Port and Channel Dock Company.

**25 January 1871**

Mr. Howard's Report: Mr. Fox's application.

It will be in the recollection of the Committee that an application from Mr. Fox for permission to land Petroleum from Barges in the tidal river at Netham was considered and agreed to. The Petroleum so landed being barged up from Vessels in Kingroad and hauled away from the place of landing to the Stores in the City, thus avoiding the prohibition against bringing the Spirits among the Shipping in the Harbour.

Mr. Fox by the application . . . seeks to lease a part of the Netham land for the purpose of building Stores suitable for the Petroleum trade . . . it appears to me that the letting any one portion of this land will be the beginning of the appropriation of the whole to manufacturing purposes. I have therefore as desired by the Committee prepared a plan which shews on what way this small estate can by the construction of Roads be formed into convenient lots for large

Works. In view of such appropriation the most suitable site for a Petroleum Special store would . . . be that so marked on the plan. Here the Stores would be entirely cut off from the remaining Dock Land. [His plan is safe, the Engineer reports]

The advantages of increased Rental to the Dock Estate and the importance of securing a growing trade like that of Petroleum to the Port which at present appears practicable will be apparent but it is necessary that the difficulty which has been considered to be in the way of any improvement of the Netham Estate should be stated. The difficulty [is] . . . that right across the land there is the ruin of what was intended for a Lock and communication between the Feeder and the Tideway.

[The Engineer advise Committee to have this]

### **6 February 1871**

A Deputation from the Committee of the Local board of Health consisting of Messrs. Perry, Spark and Ffooks accompanied by Mr. Heaven waited on the Committee to enquire upon what terms the Docks Committee would be prepared to abolish the Tolls on Horses and Carriages etc. at Princes Street Bridge and requesting an answer by tomorrow if possible . . . Resolved that with regard to the serious questions involved it is impossible to give an answer at present.

### **10 March 1871**

Moved by Mr. C. Nash That this Committee adheres to the views expressed in their Resolutions passed on the 9th January last, and that in their opinion the Report of the Board of Trade renders it more important than before that the City should have a share in the management of the Avonmouth Dock.

And thereupon Alderman Robinson moved as an Amendment That since the last Meeting the whole question as regards both Docks has been so altered that it is desirable in the opinion of this Committee that the matter should be again considered by the Town Council.

And the Question being put on the Amendment the same was lost by a Majority.

And the Question then being put on the original Motion the same was carried by a Majority.

It was then moved by Mr. Warren That under the circumstances of the Report of the Board of Trade shewing the opinion of that Department that contributory clauses should not be maintained, it is desirable that the Portishead Docks Bill should not receive the sanction of the Bristol Dock Board.

And the Question being put thereon the same was carried by a Majority.

Resolved That the foregoing Resolutions be reported to the Town Council and that a copy thereof be forwarded to the Parliamentary Bills Committee.



**Docks Committee Minute Book Vol. 7**  
**20 March 1871–16 November 1874**

**8 May 1871**

Read a Memorial from several Barge owners and Millers interested in the navigation of the River Avon between the cities of Bristol and Bath

. . . Sheweth

That very great inconvenience and expense have been experienced by your Memorialists in consequence of the frequency with which the Water has been let out of the Floating Harbour and that part of the River Avon above Prince Street Bridge. . . .

That the restoration of the Feeder Cut near the Head of the Feeder which has been disused for some years would in the opinion of your Memorialists afford relief and would give to your Memorialists access to the Tidal portion of the River Avon twice a day.

That having regard to the Docks now in course of construction at Avonmouth and the contemplated Dock Extension at Portishead the restoration of the Feeder Cut is . . . of very great importance as it would much facilitate Trade by enabling Barges to proceed direct from these Docks into the River Avon above the Feeder and thereby avoiding the Port of Bristol and effecting a considerable saving in time and expense.

[Engineer to report]

**5th June 1871**

It was Resolved That the Memorialists be informed that in the opinion of the Committee no benefit to trade would arise by the restoration of the Feeder Cut . . .

**26 June 1871**

Read a letter from Mr. Bessone the Chairman of the Regatta Committee asking permission to use the Railway Wharf for the purpose of the Regatta on Monday the 3rd July.

[Agreed 'subject to the Workmen employed on the Wharf not being interfered with']

Read a Letter from Mr. Gray of the Board of Trade addressed to the Haven Master and enclosing letters from the Commanding Officers of the Coast Guard Cruizers (*sic*) attached to H.M. Ship *Resistance* complaining of the conduct of Pilots visiting Lundy Island who plundered Vessels wrecked there and also stating that the Receivers of Wrecks on the Island had given the numbers of the Vessels of the offenders as 7, 10 and 11. And the Committee having heard the statement of the Haven Master instructed him to reply to the Board of Trade that they are ready to hear any specific complaint against any Licensed Pilot and to adjudicate thereon but that they

have no jurisdiction over the men called Lovellers who receive no licence from the Pilotage Authorities of Bristol.

## 7 August 1871

## The Report of the Docks Committee to Council

. . . Your Committee are happy to report that there has been no falling off in the Trade of the Port — the Receipts for Tonnage being £24,229 1s .3d. in 1871, against £24,211 7s. 1d. in 1870, and for Goods, £13,202 14s. 2d., against £13,214 13s. 9d. in 1870, shewing a small increase in the year of £5 14s. 7d. which is satisfactory, considering the disturbed state of the Continent for the greater part of the financial year.

The Tonnage from Foreign parts is in an equally satisfactory state, the aggregate being 355,815 Tons, against 355,921 in 1870, shewing the trifling decrease of 106 Tons, whilst on the Coastwise Tonnage there has been an increase of 21,145 tons.

The Total Expenditure of the year amounts to £101,557 17s. 1d., comprising the following items, viz:—

Ordinary Expenditure of the year, including £4,244 15s. 10d. for Interest

on Dock Mortgages for the

River and Harbour Improvement	£31,622	1s.	10d.
-------------------------------	---------	-----	------

River and Harbour Improvement	£66,828	8s.	1d.
-------------------------------	---------	-----	-----

Railway Wharf Depot	£ 9,107	17s.	1d.
---------------------	---------	------	-----

---

	£101,557	17s.	1d.
--	----------	------	-----

The Balance in hand to the 30 April was £10,082 3s. 9d. after expending £31,125 13s. 5d. out of the surplus revenue for River and Harbour Improvement.

During the year £32,355 has been raised by your Committee on the Bonds of the Corporation at 4 per cent per annum, for the Works now in progress for the River and Harbour Improvement.

Your Committee have much pleasure in stating that the trade of the Port is extending, more especially, with the principal seaports of the United States, the Tonnage from thence being 50,371 Tons in 1871, against 42,608 Tons in 1870, and 23,867 Tons in 1869.

## Report of the Engineer

### New Works

The Upper Lock leading from Cumberland Basin into the Floating Harbour is nearly completed. The Gates are all fixed, and the Engines and Hydraulic Machinery nearly finished. The Cofferdam at the upper end in the Floating Harbour has been removed; the work of removing the Dam in the Basin will be at once commenced, and it is expected the Lock will be opened for traffic in about a month.

The large Lock leading from the Basin to the River is also in an advanced state, most of the masonry of the Lock itself is completed, the principal works to finish being the River Wall and approaches at the lower end, and the completion of the Basin Walls above the

Lock. The Hydraulic Machinery for this Lock will be worked from the same engines already erected at the upper one. The Works in the River are being carried on as well as the necessities of keeping the Navigation unobstructed and other circumstances will allow.

### **Railway Wharf Depot**

The Quay Walls above and below Prince Street Bridge are completed. The Rails are being laid down on the Lower Wharf, and this part, it is expected, will be connected with the Harbour Railway and the Temple Meads Goods Station by about the end of Augustus.

### **21 August 1871**

Report from Mr. Dymond Acting Engineer . . . Now that the borings are nearly completed it appears that there is much less rock at Hotwells House Point than was anticipated and consequently much more spoil to be removed. An examination of the two quarries on Durdham Down in which the excavated material from the Docks Works has hitherto been deposited shews that No.1 has been entirely filled up and that No.2 will hold only about 3,000 yards more. It is estimated that we have yet to find room for about 40,000 yards; and it becomes a question where it is to be put. There are other quarries on the Downs — a large one at the North end and another close to the road on the Eastern side called the Chain Quarry. To reach the former Westbury road must be crossed, the “lead” and cost per yard would be increased and the quarry is too large to be improved by the partial filling that would take place. The “lead” to the other quarry would be little more than No.1 of the original Contract and a branch line about a quarter mile long would be laid from the present tramway with the rails that now run to No.2 quarry which may soon be removed. It will be necessary to cross the roads leading from Clifton Down towards Westbury but the present crossing of the more important Stoke Bishop road would be simultaneously done away with [Acting Engineer recommends using this quarry; Committee agreed. Permission to be sought from Downs Committee and Local Boards of Health]

Letter from A. Moore, Secretary of the Joint Committee of the Bristol Harbour Railway.

I duly laid before our Committee your letter of the 24 ult. and Resolution of the Docks Committee directing that the completion of the upper part of the Wharf Depot be proceeded with according to the original intention.

From this Resolution it appears that the recent proposition of the Docks Committee and Engineer for the extension of the Wharfage has been abandoned. . . . I am instructed to suggest whether it may not be advisable for the Engineer of the Docks Committee and the Engineer of the Railway to visit Hull or other places with the view of inspecting similar works . . . and reporting as to the accommodation and conveniences required at the Wharf Depot as now proposed to

be laid out and the best mode of providing the same.

[Committee accepts suggestion].

### **25 September 1871**

Read a letter from the Secretary of the Avonside Engine Company in relation to the necessity of providing a Crane capable of lifting heavy machinery at the new Railway Wharf.

Read Engineers Report and thereupon Messrs. Stothart and Pitt's Tender for Steam Crane without raising and lowering jib at £360 was accepted provided it can be finished at a time to be approved by the Engineer.

### **6 November 1871**

Henry S. Wasborough, Coroner for Bristol.

I held an inquest yesterday on the body of man named Serle, a Mason's Labourer, who was drowned last Saturday night in the Floating Harbour near the Stone Bridge. He was somewhat intoxicated and it appears walked directly from the bottom of Stephen Street into the water.

On the Inquest the jury recommended that some protection be placed there. [Committee to do so]

### **4 December 1871**

Letter from Mr. Cecil Trevor Assistant Secretary of the Board of Trade.

### **The Petroleum Act 1871.<sup>1</sup>**

Referring to the circular letter addressed to you on the 3 October last (H3932) in which your attention was drawn to the provisions of the above mentioned Act, I am directed by the Board of Trade to remind you that they have not yet received any Bye Laws from the Harbour Commissioners at Bristol and to request that my former letter may receive attention as soon as possible.

The Committee . . . directed the Town Clerk to reply . . . that in their opinion the powers possessed under the Local Act for the Water Bailiff and Quay Warden to berth Vessels and the produce adopted by Importers of Petroleum rendered it unnecessary at present to make any Bye Laws.

<sup>1</sup> 34 and 35 Vict. cap. cv.

### **11 December 1871**

. . . I am directed by the Board of Trade to point out that it is Parliament and not this board that has made it incumbent on Harbour Authorities to make Bye Laws under the Act. [Committee agree to accept River Tyne Bye Laws as a model]

**30 December 1871****Report of the Docks Committee to Council****Draft Bye-Laws under the Petroleum Act, 1871**

. . . The master of every ship entering the Port having on board Petroleum to which the Act applies and having immediately on arrival reported to the Harbour Master, as required by Clause 5 of the Act, shall proceed with such ship to such of the berths at Morgans Pill, in the River Avon, Broad Pill, in the river Avon, and Kingroad, all in the Port of Bristol, as the Harbour Master shall direct; and he shall not remove his ship from such berth . . . without the express order of the Harbour Master, or until the whole of the cargo of Petroleum has been discharged into lighters properly licensed or authorized for the purpose by the Harbour Master.

In each case a special authorization will be given by the Harbour Master at Bristol stating the precise place and mode of discharge of Petroleum from lighters.

The barrels or other vessels containing the Petroleum shall, on being taken from the lighters at the landing place, be forthwith conveyed, under proper superintendence and due care, to such place as the Local Authority having jurisdiction shall direct, and must not be allowed to remain exposed on any quay or land place.

**PRECAUTIONS**

1. The hold of every ship shall be kept freely ventilated from the time of her entrance till the cargo of Petroleum shall have been entirely discharged.
2. No ship shall be allowed to have a fire or light on board during the time of discharging, and no smoking will be allowed on the ship, the lighter or at the landing place.
3. The ship shall not . . . be left without a sufficient crew on board.
4. For the safer discharge of the cargo, an officer will be sent by the Harbour Master to superintend the carrying into effect of these Bye Laws, payment being made of the expense of such superintendence by the captain of the ship or the owner of the cargo, and the payment . . . shall continue until the production to the Harbour Master of a certificate under the hand of such officer that the cargo has been duly delivered or discharged.
5. No unlicensed craft shall be allowed to lie alongside any vessel during the discharge of her cargo.
6. Every ship or lighter, having Petroleum on board, shall keep conspicuously exhibited from sunrise to sunset a red flag.

**15 April 1872**

Resolved That in the opinion of the Docks Committee it is of the utmost importance that a Water Police should be regularly employed in the Floating Harbour for the protection of waterside property and the Shipping. That this Resolution be communicated to the Watch Committee.

**22 April 1872**

Read a Memorial from Traders and Carriers by water between Bath and Bristol.

Sheweth That your Memorialists have from time to time suffered considerable loss and delay not only from the drawing off of the water from the Feeder Canal in consequence of there being no tidal communication from the River Avon above the Feeder Lock to the Port of Bristol but also from the deposit of mud in the Feeder itself to such an extent as frequently to impede and delay the Navigation.

That the trade of such of your Memorialists as are Carriers has been . . . diverted during the occasions aforesaid to other Channels of transit whereby the dues payable . . . to your Corporation have been considerably lessened.

That in consequence of the sharp competition in the carrying trade your Memorialists fear that unless some means are forthwith adopted for obviating the difficulties . . . the water carriage between the two Cities will be abandoned to the great detriment of the Public generally.

That your Memorialists have heard to their great satisfaction that a Scheme is under consideration . . . for the construction of works consisting of a Dam and proper gates to be placed across the Float below the Marsh Bridge which will enable your Committee not only to retain the water in the Feeder when it may be necessary to let it off from the upper part of the Harbour but will afford facilities for scouring the Feeder and removing the mud which at present impedes the Navigation.

You Memorialists therefore urge that the works may be carried out with as little delay as practicable.

(Signed by 38 individuals or Companies dealing in timber, slates, corn, coal, provisions, soap, iron, coke etc.)

**18 May 1872.**

The Water Bailiff was directed to put himself in communication with the Chief Superintendent of Police with reference to the provision of two boats and necessary gear for the use of the Water Police with a view to obtaining tenders for the supply of such boats.

**10 June 1872**

Applications from Lindsay Todd Fillan and John Tomlinson for the appointment of Deputy Dock Master were considered and thereupon John Tomlinson was unanimously appointed Deputy Dock Master . . . at a Salary of £150 per annum.

**29 June 1872**

Your Sub-Committee . . . have prepared . . . a series of Tables . . . which will shew.

1. The ordinary Receipts and Expenditure of the Bristol Dock

Estate for the past three years.

2. Its Liabilities.
3. An Estimate of the probable cost of new works . . . to their completion in 1875, with the Expenditure thereon to the 30 April 1872.
4. A Financial Statement of the estimated expenditure and capital required to be borrowed to complete these works, and
5. An approximate Estimate . . . of various works, more or less urgent, in connection with the interior Harbour.

The Tables from one to four explain themselves . . . It may therefore suffice to state briefly that, if the works already authorized, and now in progress, are completed, as suggested in Table 4, by employing until 1875 the accumulating Dock surplus in each year, the authorized borrowing powers, amounting to £230,000, need not be extended, and at the end of 1875, an available balance of £13,415 may be relied on, admitting, on the one hand, that the average receipts of the past three years are maintained, and, on the other hand, that no unforeseen liability devolves on the Dock Estate.

Your Sub-Committee have also estimated that it will be necessary to set aside an annual sum of £3000 to provide, . . . for the renewal of Lock Gates, Machinery, and moveable plant, and also a further annual sum of £1000 for extraordinary repairs etc.

These amounts, being deducted from the estimated balance in 1875 of £13,415, will leave a net surplus of £9,415 available for further works, if no additional liabilities are incurred either within or without the Harbour.

Your Sub-Committee are, however, of opinion, apart from the great question of extended wharfage accommodation (a question which must soon be submitted to the Council in connection with the duties devolving on that body as recipients of the wharfage dues), that provision must be made for three classes of works described in Table No.5, which your Sub-Committee have divided as follows,

1. Those numbered from eight to twelve inclusive, amounting to £23,300, which are deemed works of urgent necessity.
2. Those numbered from one to four inclusive, amounting to £23,000, which are not so immediately pressing, and which, when completed, will produce a remunerative return, and
3. Those numbered from five to seven inclusive, amounting to £13,000, which more properly belong to the question . . . of extended Wharfage accommodation, than to a charge on the Dock Estate.

Your Sub-Committee, in directing attention to Table No.3 think it right to add that although the expenditure on new works will exceed the revised estimates that were submitted to the Council in 1868, yet that excess is mainly to be attributed to the formation of a landing stage, not then contemplated, near the new Entrance Lock, and to an unforeseen increase in the cost of excavations in the river. This excess

being accounted for, it will be found that the actual cost of the two Locks approximates with remarkable accuracy to the estimates, which must be gratifying to the committee, and reflects great credit on the skill and judgement of the Engineer.

**TABLE 1**

*The receipts and expenditure of the Bristol Docks on the basis of the receipts and expenditure of the Years 1870, 1871, 1872.*

Dr.	£		Cr.	£
To Tonnage Rates	24,622	By Interest on Loans, Dock Bonds		
To Rates on Goods	13,077	and Rent Charge	17,883	
To Rates on Houses	2,355	By Lockmen's Wages	1,651	
To Borough Rate	8,000	By Salaries	1,880	
To Feeder Rate	1,376	By Rates and Taxes, Rents,		
To Tolls, Boat Licences, Rents,		Property Tax, Printing etc,		
Rownham Ferry, Interest,		Incidental Expenses, Bristol Dock		
Cleansing the Harbour.	2,559	Company's Year's Expenses		
		Stamp Duty on Bonds etc.	1,848	
	£51,989	By Repairs of Works, Cleansing		
		the Harbour and Repairs of Roads	6,736	
				£29,998
		Balance		21,991
				£51,989

Note: This Amount includes all Receipts, but not Interest on Capital borrowed for New Works under Dock Act, 1865.

**TABLE 2**

*Liabilities of the Bristol Docks Estate*

OLD DEBT				
	Principal			Interest etc.
1740 Dock Shares	£168,381.	5s.	0d.	£ 6,735
<hr/>				
Bonds of the Corporation at 4 per Cent				
per Annum	£187,350.	0s.	0d.	£ 7,494
Ditto at 4½ per Cent	£ 69,050.	0s.	0d.	£ 3,107
Ditto remainder of £70,000 4½				
per Cent	£ 12,000.	0s.	0d.	£ 540
	£269,400.	0s.	0d.	£11,141
<hr/>				
NEW DEBT				
Bonds of the Corporation at 4 per Cent				
(Railway Wharf Depot)	£ 50,000.	0s.	0d.	£ 2,000
<hr/>				



RIVER AND HARBOUR IMPROVEMENT			
Bonds of the Corporation at 4½ per Cent	£ 50,950.	0s. 0d.	£ 2,293
Ditto 4 per Cent	£127,312.	0s. 0d.	£ 5,092
			Assumed to be borrowed at 4 per Cent
Remainder of Sum to be borrowed	£ 51,738.	0s. 0d.	£ 2,070
	£230,000.	0s. 0d.	£ 9,455

Note: Of the above Liabilities the £168,381 5s. 0d. Dock Shares leaves a fixed Rent Charge. The whole of the other liabilities are renewable from time to time at a fluctuating rate of Interest. At present the larger proportion stands at 4 per Cent, but should the renewal date be at any time higher, a proportionate deduction would have to be made from the estimated surplus.

**TABLE 3**

*River and Harbour Improvement Act 1865 Estimate of probable cost of new Works to their completion with account of Expenditure to April 30 1872.*

	<i>Works</i>	<i>Property</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Remainder</i>
	£	£	£	£
<i>New Junction Lock</i>				
Estimate, January 1868.	91,295	12,168	103,463	
As completed	91,777	12,743	104,519	
Expended to 30 April 1872	86,672	12,743	99,415	5,105
<i>New Entrance Lock</i>				
Estimate, January, 1868	111,622	40,574	157,196	
As completed	114,942	42,780	157,723	
Expended to 30 April 1872	90,970	42,780	133,750	
<i>River Improvement</i>				
Estimate, January 1868	74,190	7,127	81,317	
Estimate to completion	79,461	7,416	86,878	
Expended to 30 April 1872				
<i>Engineering and other Expenses</i>				
Estimate, January 1868	10,000		10,000	
Estimate to the completion	10,000		10,000	
Expended to 30 April 1872	5,083		5,083	
<i>River wall and Landing Stage</i>				
Estimate to the completion	14,000		14,000	
Expended to 30 April 1872	4,500		4,500	
Total Estimate to complete Works				£373,120
Total Payments made to 30 April 1872.				£279,714

**TABLE 4**  
*Bristol Docks: River and Harbour Improvement*  
*Financial Statement of Estimated Expenditure and Capital required to be borrowed.*

Year ending 30 April	Annual Expenditure	Interest at 4½ per cent and 4 per cent on money borrowed	Surplus	Surplus available af- ter paying interest	Borrowed in each year	Total borrowed
	£	£	£	£	£	£
1867	15,348		24,603	24,603		
1868	36,352	1,332	17,139	15,807	50,950	50,950
1869	63,870	2,235	17,848	15,613	3,160	54,110
1870	48,766	2,811	23,720	20,909	36,442	90,552
1871	60,828	4,245	24,304	20,059	32,355	122,907
1872	54,551	5,666	17,960	12,294	55,355	178,262
1873	56,853	8,420	22,870	14,450	51,738	230,000
1874	18,276	9,455	22,870	13,415		230,000
1875	18,276	9,455	22,870	13,415		230,000
	<u>£373,120</u>					

#### NOTES

Expenditure:— The first six years represent actual Expenditure, Surplus — the last three years approximate estimates.

Interest:— With the exception of the first £59,950 which was borrowed at 4½ per cent, all the remainder borrowed and what remains to be borrowed is taken at 4 per cent. Should the renewal date at any time be higher a proportionate reduction would have to be made from the estimated surplus.

Surplus Revenue:— The year 1867 shows an accumulated surplus:— 1868 to 1872 the actual surplus in each year:— 1873 to 1875 average estimated ordinary surplus taken on three previous years.

By the above Table it will be seen that supposing the Works to be completed in 1875 the total amount required can by the use of the Surplus Revenue be raised within the Borrowing Powers of the Act of 1865.

TABLE 5

*Approximate Estimate of various Works suggested or required, most of which have been previously reported on and considered by the Docks Committee.*

	£
1. Conversion of Brunel's Lock into a public Graving Dock, 320 ft long.	11,000
2. Forming Gridiron 200ft long, 40ft wide, outside South Pier of Entrance Lock.	5,000
3. Conversion of Old Junction Lock into Wharf, and forming sluices for scouring Cumberland Basin.	4,500
4. Removing spoil and levelling Garden ground for trade purposes.	2,500
	<hr/>
	23,000
** The foregoing Works would be productive of revenue.	
5. Lengthening West Mud Dock (including purchase of property)	5,000
6. Ditto, East Mud Dock	4,000
7. Forming a narrow Quay at St. Augustine's Butts (not including any compensation)	4,000
	<hr/>
	13,000
8. Walls, and deepening Feeder Canal	4,000
9. Alterations in scouring arrangements at Underfall Yard, so that mud dredged from Harbour may be better discharged on the Ebb Tide.	4,500
10. Dam, with Gates, between Feeder and Floating Harbour, and altering inner gates, Totterdown Lock (including compensations).	8,000
11. Additional dredger (No. 3)	5,000
12. Two Low Water Caissons for future repairs to New Lock Sills, Gate Rollers etc.	1,800
	<hr/>
	£23,300

## 22 July 1872

## The Report of the Docks Committee to Council

. . . Although there has been a falling off in the Imports of upwards of 40,000 tons (as compared with 1871), consisting of 14,491 tons of Sugar from Cuba, Brazils etc, 3,859 tons of Grain from Canada and the North of Europe, of 6,606 tons of Guano, of 11,690 tons of Timber from the North of Europe, and 3,466 tons of Timber from St. Johns, yet such has been the elasticity of trade in other branches that the deficiency has been more than made up, the Increase in the Tonnage from Foreign parts in the present year being 18,673 tons and 28,214 in the Coastwise Tonnage, and the Committee are happy to inform the Council that the Receipts for Tonnage and Goods exceed those of last year by £588 5s. 6d.

The total Expenditure of the year amounts to £105,157 11s. 3d. comprising the following items.

Ordinary and Extraordinary Expenditure, including £1,366 10s. 6d. for the Feeder Walls, New Road and Culvert at Netham, £611 3s. 5d for Moiety of the Cost sustained by the Dock Estate for Fencing and Walling the South Side of

£46,316 2s. 5d.

the New Cut between the Bedminster and Bath Bridges for the New Public Footway, £4,252 17s. 2d., for Interest on Railway Wharf Bonds (1869-1871) and £5,665 4s. 9d. for Interest on Dock Mortgages, River and Harbour Improvement.

River and Harbour Improvement	£54,551	2s.	3d.
Railway Wharf Depot	£ 4,289	16s.	7d.
	<hr/>		
	£105,157	11s.	3d.
	<hr/>		

During the present year, your Committee have raised £55,355 on the Bonds of the Corporation at 4 per cent per annum, for the Works in progress for the River and Harbour Improvement. The balance in hand to the 30 April was £16,168 4s 9d. Your Committee are happy to report that the Tonnage on Steamers from Foreign parts is more than double any previous year, the Tonnage this year being 57,463, being an increase of 29,786 tons on 1871.

The proceedings lately taken by Messrs. Gerrish and Sainsbury in the court of Queen's Bench, for the recovery of compensation for loss of Trade in connection with the Bath River Navigation, occasioned by the letting off the Water from the Upper part of the Floating Harbour, has led your Committee to take into consideration the desirability of erecting a Dam with lock gates across the Harbour below the entrance to Totterdown Lock, by which means the Water may be retained in the Feeder at times when it may be necessary to let it out in the Feeder, for the purpose of scouring the same to maintain the statutable depth, and the Committee have instructed Mr. Howard . . . to prepare plans and estimates for carrying this improvement into effect . . . the cost will be about £8,000.

### Engineer's Report.

#### New Works.

The new Junction Lock between Cumberland Basin and the Floating Harbour was opened in September last and undoubtedly affords greatly increased accommodation to the Trade of the Port. The whole of the gates, sluices and other machinery have been found to work well.

The new Entrance Lock between the Basin and the River may be considered as practically complete. The Coffor Dams will now be removed, and it is expected the Lock will be opened for the passage of vessels in October. The extension of the River Quay wall below the Lock, together with the Inclined Cattle Landing Slip and the Floating Steam Boat Landing Stage, will also be ready about the same time.

In the river considerable improvement has been made in cutting away projecting points, but much remains to be done in the work of

excavating the rock below low water. Arrangements are being made for a more rapid progress with this, but the very limited channel of the river, and the necessities of the passing Trade prevent any extensive plan of operations by means of coffer dams or similar facilities from being made available.

### **Railway Wharf Depot**

The Lower Wharf, which was opened at the beginning of the year, has now considerable traffic over it. The Transit Shed recently determined on, together with the necessary alterations on the existing lines of rails will, it is expected, be complete in about three months. The work of laying down the Rails and Turntables, . . . is also being carried out at the Upper Wharf.

### **12 August 1872**

Copy of a Resolution of the Council . . . at the Quarterly Meeting of the Council held on the 6th day of August 1872.

Resolved That the Docks Committee be empowered to borrow from time to time such sums of money not exceeding . . . £100,000 for the purposes of The Portishead Docks Act 1871. . . .

### **14 October 1872 Report of the Sub-Committee on Increased Wharfage Accommodation.**

The important question of adding to the Wharfage within the Floating Harbour has been anxiously considered by your Sub-Committee and after repeated conferences with Mr. Howard he has prepared a report embracing the whole subject and showing the different alternatives.

This report your Sub-Committee . . . lay before you in its entirety . . . they wish chiefly to draw your attention to the main recommendation with which they concur — namely that as an immediate measure the Corporation should adopt and extend the present Railway Wharves as public wharves compensating the Railway Companies by an equivalent frontage somewhat lower down the Harbour.

[They] would urge upon you the importance of bringing the subject before the Town Council without delay.

#### **[Engineer's Report]**

In looking over the banks of the Floating Harbour it is impossible now to find any land which is not already appropriated, although unfortunately a very considerable portion is occupied for purposes which do not produce any Dock Revenue. The total frontage to the Floating Harbour from the Stone Bridge and Bristol Bridge down to Cumberland Basin is about 21,000 feet which is occupied as follows:

	Feet
Public Quay including 805 ft. at Mardyke	5,791
Railway Wharves	956

Private Wharves chiefly Vessels of light draught from Guinea Street up to Bristol Bridge and also the Liverpool Steamers Wharf.	2,070
Land occupied as Timber Yards on the original flat sloping locks of the river.	5,111
Gas Works, Void spaces, Ship building Yards and frontages not available for trade producing Dock Revenue.	7,072
	<hr/> 21,000

For ships drawing 22 feet water, an ordinary draught for many frequenting this port, there are only short berths on the public quay, those near Messrs. Bush's Warehouse.

Practically there are only four sites . . . for . . . extension of quays. These are 1st the lower end of the south side of the Harbour from the Underfall Yard to Messrs. Hill's shipyard, 2nd the land from the Great Western Ship Yard upwards to the lower end of the present Railway Wharf, 3rd the frontage of Canon's Marsh from the Gas Works upwards, 4th the Bank in front of the Butts, St. Augustines.

Of these the best undoubtedly is [the second], a length of about 2,150 feet. . . . With respect to sites Nos. 1 and 3 . . . [as] the timber trade is already . . . carried on and contributes largely to the Dock Revenues, I do not see any absolute necessity at present for the expenditure of any large amount of money on the construction of Works in these localities.

. . . I am convinced that the best way is for the Corporation by agreement with the Railway Companies . . . to lay out as a public quay about 1000 feet immediately below Prince Street Bridge including the present Railway Wharf and making new provision for the Railways farther down. The Railway Companies would then get an uninterrupted line of frontage equal to that contemplated in the original scheme . . . I consider that to carry out the scheme suggested would cost the Corporation about £55,000 [Howard goes on to explain in further detail his scheme and to sketch a number of other possible improvements and ends].

I trust not to be exceeding 'my duty' in urging on the Committee the great importance of losing no further time in this matter. It is now just 20 years since Mr. Robert Osborne laid before the Committee a very able report on the same subject. Since then many of the special advantages enumerated by him are lost: much property which adjoins the Floating Harbour, then agricultural land, has been taken up and built upon. Ever since the question was before Parliament in 1863 many obstructions have arisen; and indeed while under immediate discussion in the present year some of the property which was included in negotiations connected with this scheme is being rapidly covered with small speculative buildings. . . . It would be unfortunate if here, with an established and increasing trade, and with resources available for the purpose, the interests of the Corporation

in the Dock Estate should be risked for want of fair and proper accommodation for the Shipping now frequenting the Harbour.

Thomas Howard.

Besides the question of increasing the Wharfage accommodation . . . the subject of exchanging the Dues now payable by the Borough to the Dock Estate for the Shipping Dues paid to the Borough Fund has been referred to the Sub-Committee with the view of arriving at an equitable adjustment of the Accounts of the Borough and the Docks so as to render them independent of each other. Your Sub-Committee are decidedly of opinion that such an exchange is desirable and would enable the Docks Committee to simplify the charges on shipping and goods . . . The multitude of charges in this port has long been a ground of complaint . . . This question has more than once been before the Council and the Docks Committee [sets out examples of 1861, 1863] Since that date (1863) the question has remained dormant, with the exception of frequent expressions by individuals of a desire to carry out the exchange.

Your sub-committee now draw your attention to the respective amounts of the dues and rates.

#### **Shipping Dues now paid to the Borough Fund**

	1869	1870	1871
	£	£	£
Town Dues (Nett Amount)	5,762	7,228	7,012
Mayors Dues (Gross Amount)	1,487	1,738	1,606
Water Bailiff's and Quay Warden's Fees (Nett amount)	767	737	783
Cranage Rates (Nett)	111	105	18
Wharfage, Moorage and Anchorage Dues (Nett)	3,944	4,966	4,189
	£12,071	£14,774	£13,608
Average per Annum £13,485.			

On the other hand, the Borough is now contributing £8,000 a year to the Dock Estate and the ancient City under the provisions of the Act of the Old Dock Company is rated for £2,400 making together £10,400, but it should be borne in mind that a full rate of 4d. in the £ which may be raised under the powers of the Docks transfer Act 1848 would now be £10,689 and if to this . . . is added the old Dock Rate of £2,400 a total of £13,089 is arrived at, an amount nearly equal to that of the Shipping Dues paid to the Borough Fund, which as has been shown above averages £13,484.

Your Sub-Committee are however of the opinion that notwithstanding the similarity of the amounts, it will be right in carrying out the exchange, to arrange for an annual payment from the Dock Estate to the Borough Fund in return for the protection of Police on the Quay and Floating Harbour and for any other advantages conferred by the City, and they suggest that from £1,000 to £2,000 per





annum as a fair sum. . . . It will be borne in mind that the Rates and Taxes on the Wharfrage which in 1871 amounted to £830 16s. 1d., will on the exchange being made, be payable by the Dock Estate to the Borough.

Another long desired provision is the power to charge a rate of one penny per ton per week on all Vessels remaining in the Harbour more than four weeks . . . . It has been calculated that this would produce £1,000 per annum . . . and place a check upon the removal to Bristol in ballast from other ports.

It is also important that additional powers be obtained for compelling speedy removal of goods from the Quays and Sheds. . .

Some further powers are likewise needed for regulating the speed of Steamers in the Floating Harbour.

Another point of great importance has been considered by your Sub-Committee.

The large outlay on the existing Railway Wharf, and the further extension of Wharfrage recommended in Mr. Howard's Report, will be of special advantage to the Grain and provision trades. Corn and provisions have hitherto been exempt from dock dues but it certainly seems reasonable that . . . [the] trade should contribute to the Docks Revenue, and your Sub-Committee hope that the leading members of this important trade will not oppose the obtaining power to charge a small rate. . .

It must be obvious to every one that it is the increased length and size of the Vessels trading in Corn especially that has rendered additional accommodation so necessary in the Floating Harbour: and as those Vessels are now mostly steamers much more quay and landing facilities are now required for them.

A proposed schedule is appended showing the sum that would be produced by a small charge on the provision trade.

**Particulars of Grain and Provisions, imported from 1 January to 31 December 1871. (see previous page)**

**Resolved**

That the Sub-Committee be requested to obtain the earliest possible interview with the Directors of the Harbour Railway Company . . . with a view to making some arrangement for an extension of the Wharf and for an interchange of accommodation between the Dock Committee and the Company.

**11 November 1872**

On the motion of Mr. Whitwell, it was unanimously resolved that the Secretary be instructed to reply to the letter of Mr. Heaven . . . that this Committee will be prepared to recommend the Town Council to free the Prince Street Bridge from Tolls on Vehicles, horses etc as soon as the Council are able to make satisfactory arrangements with the Directors of the Harbour Junction Railway for the abolition of Tolls for foot-passengers.

**12 January 1873****The Report of the Docks Committee to Council**

Your Committee report that in consequence of the largely increased trade of the Port they have for some time past been impressed with the necessity of providing further Wharfage accommodation for large vessels in the Floating Harbour. The first step . . . was taken under the Bristol Harbour Railway Act, 1866, by which the Corporation and the thereby incorporated were empowered to make two new Wharfs, one on each side of Prince Street Bridge, at Wapping, and to connect them by means of a short Railway with the principal Railway Termini at Temple Meads. The effect of this extension has been so satisfactory that your Committee have entered into further arrangements with the Companies to extend the Wharfs . . . and a Bill to carry the scheme into effect accompanies this Report.

The result may be briefly stated as follows:— the Wharf on the lands marked A, B, C (on the accompanying plan) of the length 1,483 feet will be exclusively City Property and applicable to the general trade, while the Wharf on D and E, of the length 1,208 feet with a power of extension over F of the further length of 308 feet will belong to the Companies and be applicable for Railway traffic. The whole length, however, will be connected with the Railway system, and will be subject to all existing Dock and City rates, while the rent charge of £2,000 a year, reserved to the Corporation by the Act of 1866, in respect of the Wharfs A and B will be suspended until the new Wharf has been completed, and will then be transferred to and made payable by the Companies in respect of the new Wharf only. All the expenses of the Bill are to be defrayed by the Companies. Mr. Howard has estimated the cost of all the works which will devolve on the Corporation . . . at £60,000 and your Committee propose to raise this sum . . . on the security of the Dock Estate, and the Wharfage, Town and Mayor's Dues. A statement of the amounts received, or estimated to be received, from all these sources for the five years hereinafter specified is annexed to this Report, and affords satisfactory [and] convincing evidence of the necessity for the works which they now recommend . . . It is gratifying also to find that the Dock Receipts for the present financial year (though partly based on an estimate) present, as compared with the corresponding period of the previous year, a marked and progressive increase. Your Committee take leave to remind the Council that they have always recognised the duty imposed on the City, to provide such Wharfage accommodation as may be necessary for the trade, and whilst the Borough Fund is benefitted by the Wharfage rates, it seems to your Committee that it would be a just proposal to charge on that Fund, or at least on so much of it as represents the Wharfage Dues, the whole expense of the contemplated improvement. In submitting this view of the question, your Committee do not advert to the Town and Mayor's Dues, for which at present the Dock Estate receives an equivalent in the form of the fourpenny rate. Your Committee, however, do not propose to charge the expense of the new works exclusively on the Borough Fund, but they are willing, in consideration of the advantage which

increased trade will bring to the Dock Estate in the form of Dock Dues, to charge that Estate in the first instance with the outlay, reverting only to the rates that have been specified to supply any deficiency, and to be a security to the parties who may advance money for the purposes of the Works. Your Committee think it necessary and prudent to suggest this arrangement, although they believe that the Dock Revenues, notwithstanding the charges that have lately been imposed upon them, will prove amply sufficient to carry into effect any works that may from time to time be found necessary for the improvement of the interior Harbour.

Available Surplus of the Dock Estate, after paying interest on the River and Harbour Improvement Bonds, the Railway Wharf Depot Bonds, and the Portishead Docks Act, 1871 Bonds for 5 years ending the 30 April 1869, 1870, 1871, 1872, and 1873.

	£	£
1869 . . . . .	17,021	
Less Interest on the Railway Wharf Depot Bonds	476	16,545
1870 . . . . .	20,909	
Less Interest on the Railway Wharf Depot Bonds	1,821	19,088
1871 . . . . .	20,059	
Less Interest on the Railway Wharf Depot Bonds	1,965	18,094
1872 . . . . .	14,611	
Less Interest on the Railway Wharf Depot Bonds	1,954	12,657
1873 (8 months Actual, 4 months Estimated)		14,338
		5) £80,722
		£16,144

#### Five Years' Average Surplus

Amounts received by the Corporation of Bristol for Wharfage received by the Corporation of Bristol for Wharfage, Anchorage, and Moorage, Mayor's Dues and Town Dues, for five years ending 31 August, 1872, as per City Treasurer's printed Annual Accounts.

	1868 £	1869 £	1870 £	1871 £	1872 £
Wharfage					
Anchorage Net	3,738	4,044	5,066	4,289	5,066
Moorage					
Mayor's Dues, Gross	1,395	1,487	1,738	1,606	1,647
Town Dues, Net	5,302	5,762	7,228	7,012	7,673
	£10,435	£11,293	£14,032	£12,907	£14,386

**10 February 1873**

The Engineer reported that Henry Newman, a man in the employ of the Committee, was accidentally drowned from the Dredger Board on the 24 January last leaving a Widow and 6 children.

Resolved That a donation of £10 be paid to the Revd. Mr. Prideaux with a request he will apply the amount as he may think best for the relief of the Widow and children.

**7 April 1873**

The Haven Master attended and made the following report . . . upon the conduct of Joseph Rowles Pilot of this Port whilst piloting the Steamship *Great Western* . . .

1st Upon reaching Kingroad and finding himself surrounded by a dense fog it would have been prudent on the Pilot's part to have anchored the Vessel at once.

2ndly That upon deciding to proceed to Sea he was also wrong in stopping the Steamer when he had reached a point (so far as he could judge) only about a Mile below Portishead, as by this Stoppage of more than 20 minutes he lost proper control over the Vessel in the narrowest part of the deep water Channel and was at the mercy of the tide and all its peculiarities.

3rdly That he was wrong in not steering at once a direct course to pass between the Hook and the English Grounds, until the Vessel had reached the Western part of the English Grounds, where she would have had a more certain tide and a much wider space to drift in, whilst the Engine was stopped. I cannot but conclude therefore that the pilot committed a grave error in judgement, I wish to add that it gives me pain thus to condemn the conduct of a man who has been blameless hitherto, but I could not have reported otherwise without departing from my own plain duty as an Officer of your Committee. [the Pilot was unable to attend in consequence of illness; his suspension was continued]

**21 April 1873**

Joseph Rowles the Pilot being present stated that when the Ship reached Kingroad the fog lifted which was the reason why he proceeded on instead of anchoring, but when he came opposite the Black Nore the fog thickened and the tide took the starboard bow of the Ship and thus the accident happened that he had been a pilot nearly 20 years and this was the first complaint made against him.

The Committee . . . ordered that the Pilot Joseph Rowles who had been suspended from the 27 March last be further suspended from duty as a Pilot until the 1 June next and that he be severely reprimanded and that such suspension be reported to the Council.

**28 July 1873****Report of the Docks Committee to Council**

The total expenditure of the year amounts to £94,035 10s. comprising

the following items, Ordinary and Extraordinary Expenditure, including £1025 19s. 5d. on account of the Feeder Dam at Totterdown, now in course of construction, £350 3s. for the Feeder Wall, and removing Waste Heap at Netham, £812 1s. for the Wall and fixing iron. Iron Railings on Bank of River between Bath Bridge and Bedminster Bridge, and £1225 15s. 5d. for the Wall below Bedminster Bridge, £8,334 17s. 8d. for Interest on Dock Mortgages for River and Harbour. Improvement, £1,962 7s. 1d. for Interest on Railway Wharf Depot Bonds and £305 2s for Interest on Bonds for the Portishead Dock Undertaking . . . £44,449 2s. 3d.

River and Harbour Improvement	£34,475	16s.	11d.
Railway Wharf Depot	£ 3,110	10s.	10d.
Portishead Dock Undertaking	£12,000	0s.	0d.
	<hr/>		
	£94,035	10s.	0d.

Your Committee during the present year have raised £51,738 for the Works in progress for the River and Harbour Improvement, and £18,000 for the Portishead Dock undertaking both of these amounts on the Bonds of the Corporation at 4 per cent per annum.

The Balance in hand to the 30 April last was £28,548 16s. 8d. Your Committee are happy to report a satisfactory increase in the Revenue for Tonnage as well as Goods. The receipts for Tonnage in 1873 being £26,340 4s. 10d. against £24,718 7s. 8d., shewing an increase of £1,621 17s. 2d. and receipts for Goods being £14,646 5s. 5d. against £12,909 3s. 10d., shewing an increase of £1,737 1s. 7d.

The Tonnage from Foreign Parts amounts to 411,014 Tons in the present year, against 374,488 Tons in 1872, being an increase of 36,526 Tons and the Tonnage of Steam Vessels from Foreign Parts has nearly doubled that of last year, the Tonnage in 1873 being 107,114 Tons as against 57,463 Tons in 1872 shewing an increase of 49,651 Tons. On the Coastwise Tonnage of Steam Vessels there is a decrease of 3,255 Tons in the present year. . . .

#### **Engineer's Report.**

I beg to report that the new Entrance Lock between Cumberland Basin and the River was opened for traffic on the 19th inst. The whole of the Machinery, Gates, Sluices and Works connected with the new Junction Lock have worked very satisfactorily during the past 12 months.

The excavations in the River, which are the only parts of the new works remaining unfinished, will be proceeded with as fast as the special difficulties connected with the navigation will permit.

The excavations for the new Dam between the Feeder and the Float are just bottomed out and the foundations for the permanent work about to be laid.

Tenders for the new Bridge designed to give an improved roadway over Totterdown Lock will, it is expected, to be laid before the Committee on Monday next.

The Lower Railway Wharf has been much in use during the past year, but it is found altogether inadequate for the special trade frequenting it.

### **29 September 1873**

The Committee . . . considered . . . the Election of Deputy Quay Warden and Water Bailiff in the room of John Wilson deceased. Mr Wait moved that distinct instructions be given to the newly appointed Deputy Quay Warden and Water Bailiff that he do not undertake private Surveys of Ships or Cargoes but that his time shall be given . . . to his official duties exclusively and that his residence shall be in the immediate vicinity of the Docks. Carried by a majority.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The salary was fixed at £200 p.a. and after several candidates attended before the Committee Frederick Lewin was appointed. John Tomlinson was appointed Deputy Dock Master at £200 p.a. at the same meeting.

### **27 October 1873**

Resolved unanimously That a Commission of 2 per cent be paid to Mr. Howard on £100,000, the estimated . . . cost of the Harbour Railway Wharves, that £1,000 be paid at once for the portion of the work now completed . . . and that the remaining £1000 be paid to Mr. Howard from time to time as the works progress. With reference to the Engineer's permanent salary Resolved that Thomas Howard be appointed Engineer to the Docks Committee at a salary of £750.

### **15 February 1874**

Letter from the Bristol Cocoa Missions Committee, Samuel Tanner, Chairman, Alexander Grace, Treasurer . . . The Bristol Cocoa Missions Committee have for some time been desiring to open a Cocoa House in the neighbourhood of St. Philipps Marsh Bridge to supply the Docksmen, Bargemen and others with Cocoa, the spot which appears most suitable . . . is that adjoining the Old Toll House on the Bridge and we ask you kindly to grant us the use of a piece of land there 23 feet by 30 feet believing that great good will be the result. We have already two Cocoa Houses in Bristol one on the Grove and the other in Taylor and Low Brothers Timber Yard, Cumberland Road from which about 1300 gals. of Cocoa and Coffee are sold already.

### **9 March 1874**

The Committee then took into consideration Tenders for the new Railway Wharf Wall and . . . it was resolved unanimously that the Tender of Messrs. Church and Phillips at the sum of £35,447 be accepted.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Howard presented the draft copy of a Letter which it was proposed should be sent to the Society of Merchant Venturers

Referring to the negotiations which have taken place between the

Docks Committee and the Society of Merchants as the user of the Merchants' Dock<sup>2</sup> for the purpose of laying up empty Vessels, Mr. Howard reports to the Committee that at a Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Society which he attended it was arranged that the Society would be willing to let the Corporation have, for a term of 7 years, the partial use of the Dock on condition of their dredging out at the rate of 1,000 tons of deposit per annum. The frontage of the wharves on the west and north side of the Dock to be kept free for the use of the Society's tenants but the Corporation to have the privilege to lay their Vessels on the east side of the Dock. It was also stipulated that the Corporation may, at their option, dredge out the total quantity of 7,000 tons agreed upon at any earlier time or times at a quicker rate than that of 1000 Tons per Annum. [Approved]

<sup>1</sup> Messers Church and Phillips of Pile St. were builders and contractors (see *J. Wright & Co's Mathews' Bristol Directory*, 1874).

<sup>2</sup> P.V. McGrath, *The Merchant Venturers of Bristol*, p. 345 note 119 for a reference to this transaction.

### 16 March 1874

That this Committee having received with great regret the announcement of the decease of Mr. John Drew late Haven Master<sup>1</sup> hereby records its deep sense of the ability with which for the long period of 33 years he discharged the duties entrusted to him.

It was Resolved unanimously that it be recommended to the Council that in future the Haven Master be paid by Salary and that he be required to pay over all fees to the credit of the Borough Fund. [Recommended Salary, £450 p.a.]

<sup>1</sup> *Western Daily Press* 10 March for a brief notice of John Drew's death. He was aged between 70 and 80 and was out and about in Shirehampton where he had his office until a few days before he died.

### 20 April 1874

Read a further Report from the Haven Master . . . In compliance with instructions received at the last meeting of the Docks Committee . . . I have made enquiries into the circumstances which led to the grounding of S.S. *Kronprinz*<sup>1</sup> on the evening of the 1st inst. and . . . they are as follows

*Pilot's statement.* The *Kronprinz*, Master Hall, steamed up the Channel with the Pilot Jack flying and entered the Swash in tow of the tug *Advance*, Master Handcock, at about 6.45 p.m. The Pilot. George Carey, went on board inside the entrance to the Swash and at once asked the Master to take a second tug which he refused to do, saying that if he (Carey) was going to talk in that way he had better get into his boat again: by this time the *Kronprinz* was not far from Nelson Point and the Pilot while admitting it was too late on the tide, says it was too late to turn back and he therefore proceeded. The Pilot states he had no further words with the Master nor has he any complaint to make against the Master of the Tug. On rounding the

Horseshoe, the *Kronprinz* did not readily answer her helm and would not follow round in the wake of the tug, and although the engines of the *Kronprinz* were first stopped and then reversed she struck on the right bank close to where she now lies. At this time it must have been close to H.W. The *Kronprinz* backed astern full speed; the tug tried to tow her astern, first with the tow rope forward and then aft and she also tried to tow her quarter up against the stream so as it were to wrench her off; but without effect. By this time the tide was falling rapidly and in about three quarters of an hour the Crew, Master and Pilot left the Ship just before it fell over on her starboard side.

Captain Hall's statement differs from the Pilot's in two important points: he says that the Pilot went on board at the entrance of the Swash, and he fixes the time a little earlier: he also says that a Steamer passing down stopped, gave him a pull and broke the tow rope, a circumstance of which the Pilot professes himself entirely ignorant. [Pilot suspended for time being]

<sup>1</sup> J. Latimer, *The Annals of Bristol in the nineteenth century*, (Bristol 1887) p. 478 describes the wreck of the *Kron Prinz* as the most serious disaster in the Avon since the stranding of the *Demerara* in 1851 and comparable to the loss of the *Gypsy* in 1878.

## 15 June 1874

Read the Letter dated the 1st November last from the Masters of Steam Vessels asking that Brunel's Lock may be kept open, as a second means of entrance and exit into and from the Cumberland Basin, also the reports of Capt. Green, the Harbour Master and the Engineers thereon and it was Resolved that the Engineer be instructed to furnish an estimate of the minimum cost of placing the whole work in repair, distinguishing between the cost of a new Bridge and the necessary repairs to the Lock omitting the Hydraulic Apparatus.

## 22 June 1874

The Engineer stated that the cost of a new Bridge over Brunel's Lock would be about £4,000 and repairs to Caissoon Gates Timber Dolphin etc. £3,500. [Engineer to prepare plans for new bridge]

## 27 July 1874

### Report of the Docks Committee to Council

The total Expenditure of the year amounts to £106,269 11s. 2d. It will be seen that the Extraordinary Expenditure includes among other items £5,304 19s. 3d. on account of the Feeder Dam in course of construction at Totterdown; £962 18s. 1d. repairing the damage of Guinea Street Pier Head; £262 18s. 7d. on account of the new Bridge in course of construction at Totterdown; £3,241 7s. 2d. on account of the new Dredge Boat; and £12,000 in discharge of the Bonds for the balance of the £70,000 borrowed under the provisions of the Dock Act, 1848.

The Balance in hand the 30 April was £23,126 17s.



During the present year your Committee have raised £22,800 for the Railway Wharf Depot Extension, and £25,245 for the Portishead Docks Undertaking, both of these Amounts being on the Bonds of the Corporation at 4 per cent per annum interest.

The Receipts of Tonnage and Goods in 1873 shewed a large increase as compared with the preceding year, and the Committee have now the pleasure to report a steady increase in the trade of the port, the receipts for Tonnage and Goods being £2,135 15s. 3d. in excess of the year 1873.

The Tonnage of Sailing Vessels from Foreign parts shews an increase of 21,926 tons and of Steamers of 8,122 tons in the present year. . .

### **Report of the Engineer.**

I beg to report that the new Junction and Entrance Locks, with the Hydraulic Machinery connected with them, have worked well during the last twelve months. The time of maintenance of the works under the late Mr. Tredwell's Contract is now expired, and all accounts connected therewith have been satisfactorily settled up.

The work of excavation of the rock below the bed of the river is necessarily comparatively slow. It is impracticable on account of the Shipping to erect any Cofferdams in the narrow river, to enclose the site being worked upon, and the tides being of late extremely muddy there is a great loss of time each tide in pumping out the water and clearing the work for renewed operation. We are now trying some experiments with Steam Drills, from which I hope we may be able to make somewhat greater progress. A considerable amount of stone and ballast has been dredged from the bed of the river, and this work is now being carried on every set of neap tides.

The New Bridge over the Canal at Totterdown, undertaken jointly with the Sanitary Authority, has been some time opened for traffic, and is found greatly to facilitate the road traffic in this locality.

The Masonry of the Dam which is being erected to divide the Floating Harbour from the Feeder Canal is about three quarters completed, and one pair of the Lock Gates are ready for fixing. When this is done the barge traffic will be passed through the new work and a temporary dam driven in the present channel to enable us to build the West Wing Walls.

The New Quay Wall to be built under agreement with the Railway Companies for the extension of the Railway Wharf is now being constructed. The works are let by contract, and a length of about 150 feet of the wall is well up to Float level. When completed there will be, in conjunction with a short wall to be built by the Companies, a New Wharf of about half-a-mile in length below Prince's street Bridge, having a depth of 22 feet water.

The Dock Works generally are in fair condition, but we are suffering from want of water in the Float, and obliged to suspend Dredging operations.

**7th November 1874**

Letter from the Secretary of the Local Marine Board,<sup>1</sup> Henry Brittan.

I am directed . . . to state that a conference having lately taken place between this Board and a Gentleman from the Board of Trade on the subject of the best means of suppressing the practice of crimping at this Port, it was deemed advisable that notices to Masters of Vessels about to arrive in this Port should be distributed to such Masters (a copy of which notice I enclose) and that an Officer should be appointed by the Local Board specially for the purpose of apprehending Crimps and other unauthorised persons boarding such Vessels and that the co-operation of the Pilotage Authorities of this Port . . . should be solicited . . . and to beg the favour of their instructing the Pilots . . . to aid the distribution of such notices . . . and give such Officer . . . such reasonable assistance as may be required. [Committee agreed to request]

<sup>1</sup> The Local Marine Board, whose members included the Mayor and several members of the Docks Committee, sought to foster the interests of seamen by conducting examinations in navigation and seamanship, inspecting ships' lights and fog signals and as late as 1869 employed an Inspector of Lime Juice.

**16 November 1874**

That this Committee cannot separate without recording their sense of the loss which they in common with the Council and the Citizens of Bristol has sustained by the sudden and lamented death of the Town Clerk Mr. Burges who for many years past filled the appointment of Joint Clerk to this Committee with a zeal, courtesy and success which this Committee cannot expect ever to see excelled. . . .<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Western Daily Press* 12, 17 November 1874 for the obituary and funeral of Mr. Burgess.

## **Docks Committee Minute Book Vol. 8**

### **23 November 1874–31 December 1877**

**18 January 1875**

Read a Memorial from the Foremen of the Dockmen at Cumberland and Bathurst Basin asking to be furnished with some distinctive mark or Uniform whereby they might be distinguished as persons in Official employ. [Harbour Master to get tenders for Uniforms]

**1 February 1875**

#### **Report of the Docks Committee to Council.**

It is with regret your Committee report the death of their Secretary Mr Hinton, who served the late Dock Board and afterwards the Committee for upwards of 28 years with uniform ability and zeal.<sup>1</sup>

The state of business in the office requires that no time should be lost in appointing his successor. The election will be made by the Council, and as your Committee feel that the efficiency of the office . . . will materially depend on the capacity and business-like qualities of the gentleman who may be selected . . . they submit to the Council that a liberal salary should be offered, and that the greatest care should be taken with reference only, to the public interests, to choose the most eligible candidate.

Your Committee consider that the Secretary must devote all his time to his official duties. That he must be competent to conduct all, except the legal and engineering, business of the Committee. To collect all Rates and Dues, including the Town Dues, when a vacancy should occur in the Collectorship of those Dues. To keep the Books and Accounts, to superintend and direct the Clerks, and to be able generally to advise the Committee on the management of commercial business and the requirements of trade, not only in Bristol but in other ports.

For these purposes your Committee propose to give a salary of £500, and to require the gentleman who may be elected to find security for the due performance of his duties in £2000, the premiums on the policy being paid by the committee.

If this Report is adopted by the Council your Committee will issue advertisements in a more detailed form, and submit that they should be empowered to select from the Candidates three persons for the choice of the Council.

<sup>1</sup> However *The Western Daily Press* 20 January 1875 reported his death in a bare two lines. It would seem that his influence in Dock affairs had been slight compared with that of his energetic successor F. B. Girdlestone.

**27 March 1875**

#### **Report of the Committee to Council.**

Your Committee received application from 26 candidates [for the office of Secretary to the Dock Board] and after a careful examination of their testimonials, a Sub-Committee reduced the list

to five Gentlemen, from whom your Committee selected three, for the choice of the Council . . . The Gentlemen selected are:

Mr. WILLIAM JOHNSON, Chief Clerk to the Southampton Dock Company and Assistant to the Secretary and Superintendant of that Company.

Mr. ALEXANDER FORROW, Secretary to the Associated Docks Committee of London, and Establishment Clerk in the Secretary's Office of the East and West India Dock Company London.

Mr. FRANCIS BROOKE GIRDLESTONE, late of the Indian Navy and Deputy Superintendant, 3rd Grade, of the Topographical Survey of India.

<sup>1</sup> The copy of the advertisement for the post pasted in the *Minutes* says the annual salary will be £500.

### **5 April 1875**

The Town Clerk laid before the Committee the following Extract from the Proceedings of the Council . . . Resolved that Mr Francis Brooke Girdlestone be appointed Secretary.

### **26 April 1875 (Calendared)**

The Engineer to report on whether it would be in the Committee's interest to own its own barges for work on the river or to continue the present system of hiring from private owners, and to report on the number, lifting power and condition of the cranes

### **24 May 1875 (Calendared)**

Recommended that the practice of the Harbour Master of surveying vessels is objectionable and be discontinued. His salary to be increased to £400 p.a. in recognition of Captain Baker's long service, increased duties and the fact that fees from surveys had been allowed by the Committee and treated as part of the emoluments of the office.

### **5 July 1875**

Read Report of the Engineer. Ordered: That so much of it as refers to the discharge of sewers and privies into the Floating Harbour be sent to the Urban Sanitary Authority with the urgent request . . . that so far as the Sanitary Authority can divert the Drains and enforce other arrangements in reference to the discharge of the contents of Privies into the Floating Harbour they will do so. Resolved That the samples of water now produced be submitted to the City Analyst with a request that he will report to this Committee whether the offensive mixture contained in such samples is injurious to health.

12 July 1875

Western Counties Laboratory  
9 North St.

Bristol. July 8th 1875.

I have examined and analysed the four samples of water taken from the Float and find as follows.

**No 1 *Fon and Bailey's Pickle Timber Yard***

Is neutral and simply water mixed with waste Naptha and would not be injurious to health. It would only render the Float water impure with tarry and greasy matter.

**No 2 *Hatters Shop in Castle Street***

Is neutral and contains only Gallotannade of Iron which is used as a dye.

**No 3 *Netham Works***

Neutral — dark in colour — and contains a *small proportion* of a tarry naptha resembling crude carbolic acid.

**No 4 *Fluid from Galvanizing Works***

Is very acid from Hydrochloric and other acids and contains in solution a large quantity of several metals as Iron, Copper, Zinc etc. This fluid would be just the one to cause the effervescence of the mud and the evolution of sulphurelled Hydrogen and produce the inky appearance observed and the offensive smells so much complained of.

The first three would not do so but only add to the discolouration of the float water.

W. Walter Stoddard F C J E

Analyst for the City of Bristol

I should not call either of the above injurious to health "*per se*" unless swallowed.

26 July 1875

**The Report of the Docks Committee to Council,**

The total Expenditure of the year amounts to £108,243 1s. 9d. It will be seen that the Extraordinary Expenditure includes among other items £2,794 13s. 4d. on account of the Feeder Dam, in course of construction; £400 11s. 6d. balance of cost of repairing damage to Guinea Street Pier Head; £429 11s. 5d. for Widening Road, South Side of Cumberland Basin; £506 0s. 2d. repairing the Underfall Sauces and Valves; £2,984 2s. 4d. balance of cost of the New Dredger; and £3,575 1s. 3d. for the River and Harbour Improvement.

The Balance in hand on the 30 April was £23,893 5s. 5d. During the present year Committee have raised £21,300 for the Railway Wharf Depot Extension and £24,000 for the Portishead Dock Undertaking, both these amounts being on the Bonds of the Corporation at Four per cent per annum interest.

The Receipts for Tonnage and Goods this year amount to £41,069

6s. 4d. against the receipts of the previous year of £43,740 15s. 7d.

The Tonnage of Sailing Vessels from Foreign ports shows a decrease on the year of 29,219 tons whilst the Tonnage of Steamers during the same period has increased 13,034 tons.

Having regard to the serious depression in many branches of Trade during the past year, your Committee think these results will be considered satisfactory.

### Engineer's Report

I beg to report that the Docks Works are in a fair condition. The question of a new Bridge at Princes Street is one, however, which cannot be much longer delayed. The Swing Bridge over the outer lock at Bathurst Basin will also require extensive repairs or renewal before long.

The New Locks and other Works at Cumberland Basin continue to work well. The new Bridge over Brunel's Lock, at this Basin, is just about to be delivered and erected.

The new Quay Wall at the Railway Wharf is proceeding satisfactorily. The Ropewalk buildings are now all cleared away, and we have possession of the ground for completing the wall. The Railway Companies are excavating the ground, so as to bring it to Wharf level. About two-Thirds of the wall is completed. The work of excavating the Floating Harbour in front will soon commence. The contract for the new Sheds at Bathurst Wharf, above Princes Street Bridge, is being carried out, and they should shortly be completed.

The new Feeder Dam having now both pairs of Gates fixed, we have also just about completed two new pairs of Gates for the Old Totterdown Lock these Gates being so built as to allow of an efficient scour down the Feeder. The work of taking out the old gates and a lowering the sills for receiving these Gates will shortly be commenced.

The excavations in the River are being carried out as opportunity offers. About 23,000 tons of ballast have been dredged from the Bed of the River during last year.

### 30 August 1875

The Haven Master reported that the S.S. *Great Western* had grounded on the Welsh Ground whilst in charge of the Senior Pilot Mr Joseph Brown on the 28th Instant.

### 27 September 1875

Ordered that the Engineer do prepare specifications and obtain tenders for the manufacture and erection of a 35 tons Crane proved up to a lifting weight of 45 tons.

### 4 October 1875

#### Report of the Docks Committee to Council

. . . Joseph Browne the Senior Pilot of this Port is unable from

advancing age and infirmity, to perform his laborious and responsible duties. Mr Browne is upwards of 70 years old and has been a Pilot for 41 years. Your Committee recommend that he be placed on the Superannuation List and be granted a Pension of £25.

### **18 October 1875**

The Secretary was directed to proceed to Hull, Goole, Leith, Glasgow, Greenock, Liverpool or other ports and to make himself conversant with the method of conducting traffic at the Docks of those ports . . .

### **29 November 1875**

Resolved that Messrs. Stothert and Pitt's tender of £2,920 for a 35 Ton Fairbairn Steam Crane . . . be accepted.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For an illustration of this crane see R. A. Buchanan and N. Cossons, *Industrial History in pictures: Bristol* (Newton Abbot, 1970) p. 38.

### **3 January 1876**

Your Committee report that they have prepared a set of Bye-Laws for regulating the use of the Quays and Sheds, for regulating the use of the Harbour, and also for the protection of the Dock Works and Property.

### **31 January 1876**

Resolved. That . . . it is desirable to repitch the whole of the quays gradually and that the cost of doing the same be spread over a period not exceeding three years.

Read a letter from Admiral Foote, Dock Superintendant at Newport, respecting the contemplated erection of a lighthouse at Bull Point on the Bristol Channel, and enclosing copy of a memorial from shipowners and others at Barnstaple, Bideford and Appledore praying that a light be erected at Morte instead of at Bull Point and stating that the Harbour Authorities and shipping interest at Newport fully concurred in the view held at the above places and requesting information as to what steps the Harbour Authorities at this Port proposed to take in the matter . . . [Committee agreed with the opinion]

### **7 February 1876**

With reference to the *Explosive Substances Act 1875*<sup>1</sup> . . . the Town Clerk reported that he had prepared a draft of Bye Laws to be made by the Corporation . . . for regulating the conveyance, loading and unloading of Explosives and submitted the draft of to the Harbour Department of the Board of Trade.

The sub-Committee on Quays and Sheds reported that out of 17 candidates who had applied for the appointment as Traffic Manager

for the Quays and Sheds they had selected Mr A.N. Harrison . . .<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 38 and 39 Vict. cap. xvii.

<sup>2</sup> He resigned a few months later, see *Minutes* 1 May 1876.

### 13 March 1876

The sub-Committee on Quays and Sheds reported that they recommended the following rates as the terms upon which the Secretary may grant permission for goods to remain upon any Quay or in any free Shed for a longer period than 72 hours vizt. [much detail on the terms]

. . . it being the object of the Council . . . to afford reasonable facilities to every branch of business but at the same time to prevent the abuse which has long prevailed of using the Quays and Sheds for purposes for which they are not intended.

### 1 May 1876

Ordered, that with the view of bringing this question before the Town Council at the earliest possible date, the Engineer be directed to submit a full report on the present state of the existing Prince Street Bridge and the probable expense which will have to be incurred by the Committee to provide a new bridge.

### Report of the Docks Committee to Council.

The Dock and Shipping interests have contributed to the Borough Fund for year ending the 30th April last the following sums. viz.

Wharfage, Anchorage, and Moorage Dues	£ 9,093
Mayor's Dues	£ 1,860
Water Bailiff and Quay Warden's Fees	£ 1,244
Town Dues	£11,101
	<hr/>
	£23,298

It will be satisfactory to the Council to hear that notwithstanding the general depression of trade during the past year, the Dock Receipts for the year ended the 30th April last exceeded those of 1875 by £3336 and those of 1874 by £975, the latter being the most prosperous year that the Dock Estate had then experienced.

### 15 May 1876

The sub Committee appointed . . . for the appointment of Traffic Manager on the Quays reported that there were 53 applicants . . . Mr James McNab was appointed . . . on a Salary of £150 per annum . . . and that when on duty he be required to wear the usual Dock Uniform.



**29 May 1876 (Calendared)**

The Engineer reported that he had called in Captain Bedford R.N. (who had made the last survey of King Road in 1867) and instructed him to report on the likely effects of the Bristol Port and Channel Dock Co.'s deposit on the north side of Denny Island of material to be excavated to form an entrance to their Dock from the Swash Channel. Captain Bedford was to report on whether this 300,000 cubic yards of material might be conveyed by tidal action into the Avon, Severn or Kingroad. Also having regard to any changes that had taken place in the upper part of the Severn estuary between the Admiralty Survey of 1847 and his own of 1867, Captain Bedford was to report whether depositing this material to the north of Denny Island would be prejudicial to the navigable channel and if so where a more suitable place might be found.

Letter of Town Clerk to the Assistant Secretary, Harbour Department, Board of Trade

It is the opinion of the Engineer to the Bristol Docks Committee that comparison of the Surveys of 1847 and 1867 shows that the upper Severn estuary is gradually shoaling and that this will increase if excavated material from the entrance to the Channel Dock is deposited. The Corporation believe that it is in Bristol's and the national interest that the large Docks on either side of the Avon be completed. The Engineer suggests that the Board of Trade appoint a Surveyor to inquire into the facts and suggest what shall be done.

**1 June 1876 (Calendared)**

Captain Bedford reports that comparison of the surveys of 1847 and 1867 shows a diminution in the navigable channel. His opinion is that any deposit of material will make this worse. He can propose no nearer place for deposit than westward of the Holmes.

Letter from C. Cecil Trevor, Board of Trade, Harbour Dept. 30 May refusing to interfere or appoint a Surveyor.

Resolved to send Captain Bedford's report to the Board of Trade.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Girdlestone . . . was requested . . . to enter upon the duties of Collector of Town Dues and to manage the business with the aid of the Clerks in the Shipping Dues Office . . . to compensate the Clerks . . . for the extra labour they will have the annual allowance for Clerks of £300 a year . . . to be increased to £350.

<sup>1</sup> *Minutes* 12 June 1876 show the Board of Trade repeating its refusal and the Committee deciding it sees no reason to advise the Council to take action.

**19 June 1876**

Read a letter from Mr W. Lane, asking whether the Dock Board will allow the reporters of the Bristol Daily Papers to be present at the interview when the Deputation waits upon the Committee, this day, *re* Bye Laws.

Whereupon, It was resolved unanimously that as it has never been

the custom of this Committee to allow Reporters to be present at their meetings they see no reason to deviate from the same . . .

A Deputation consisting of various members of the corn, coasting and hauling trades then waited on the Committee and presented memorials complaining of the working of Bye Laws 1, 2, 6, 11 and 12 . . . Whereupon after hearing the views on the same subject of various Members of the said Deputation It was Resolved That this Committee . . . will give the same their very careful consideration and will reply in writing thereto at an early date.

Letter of Town Clerk to Messrs. Stoaite, Hosegood & Co. and other memorialists (Calendared)

Bye Law No. 6 which requires non duty-paying goods to be removed from the Quays or Free Sheds within 72 hrs appears to press unduly on the Grain trade. The Committee admits that this business, whose annual export is said to exceed one million quarters, deserves special attention. But it must point out that the trade has long been conducted as if the public Quays and not private warehouses were the proper place to store grain, not for reasonable but for unreasonable periods, thus impeding passage of the Quays and interfering with other business. However the Committee think that an extension of 48 hrs to the statutable 72 hrs may be allowed on application. The Committee remind the memorialists that important as is the corn trade to Bristol it is favoured in being free from Dock rates.

## 24 July 1876

Ordered that Mr. Howard be requested to obtain estimates for a Tug Boat which shall combine the ordinary uses of a Tug Boat with a steam fire engine and also a steam pumping apparatus for pumping out stranded or sunken vessels as suggested by the Engineer.

## 5 August 1876

### Report of the Docks Committee to Council

Notwithstanding the depression of trade which has prevailed, the Committee are glad to report that the year which closed on 30 April last was financially the most prosperous one which the Docks Estate has experienced. There is an increase in the Receipts of this year for Tonnage and Goods as compared with those of last year of £3,342 1s. 7d. and as compared with the year 1873-4 of £670 12s. 4d.

The revenue for the year from all sources amounts to £61,423 10s. 8d.

Expenditure was as follows, viz.

	s.	d.
For ordinary maintenance of Works including Dredging, and for Salaries, Rents and Incidental Expenses	£15,025	1 8
For New Bridge, Brunel's Lock, Cumberland Basin	£2,469	3 8
Cattle Pens, Cumberland Basin	£212	9 4
For alterations to Totterdown Lock and deepening Feeder Canal	£1,625	9 5

For Removal of part of St Augustine's Bark	£542	3	3
For Feeder Dam at Totterdown	£1,258	7	7
For River and Harbour Improvement Works	£1,238	7	8
For Rent Charge to the old Bristol Dock Co.	£6,678	13	0
For Interest on Debt	£26,630	18	0
For first Instalment to Sinking Fund as per Sec. 16			
Bristol Harbour Roadway Act 1873	£1,500	0	0

The balance in hand on 30 April last was £28,136 2s 5d.

During the past year your Committee have borrowed under the powers of the Bristol Harbour Railway Act, 1873 the sum of £4,500, and of the Portishead Dock Act, 1871, the sum of £23,655. These amounts have been raised on the Bonds of the Corporation at 4 per cent interest per annum under the former Act. The Committee have still power to borrow £11,400 and under the latter Act £9,100.

Your Committee have been advised with reference to the arrangements made for ensuring the completion of the Portishead Dock by the Portishead Docks Act, 1871 Sec 75 to pay to the Company the balance for which the Corporation remained liable for calls on the Shares held by them on the undertaking. Such balance, amounting to £24,000, has been accordingly paid.

The matter does not come within the scope of this Report the payment having been made during this year, but the Committee think the fact of sufficient importance specially to report it to the Council. They desire also to add that the period for completing the work has been extended by the Board of Trade to the 8 November, 1877.

The Code of Bye Laws . . . for regulating the use of the Quays, and Sheds and Harbour generally has been in operation for the last few months, and, it is believed has worked well.

It should also be added that another Code of Bye Laws made by the Council under the Explosives Act 1875, has received the sanction of the Board of Trade, and is now in operation.

While your Committee feel gratified in reporting so considerable an increase in the Trade of the Port, they believe that the splendid line of new Sheds which will shortly be ready for public use at Bathurst Wharf, and the extension of the Wharf, to the westward of Prince Street Bridge, which is now fast approaching completion, will attract to the Port, and enable the Committee to deal successfully with, a still larger traffic especially with reference to the greater facilities now afforded to large vessels, in consequence of the opening of the new Lock at Cumberland Basin.

### **Engineer's Report.**

The new Bridge over Brunel's Lock Cumberland Basin is completed . . . The question of a new Bridge for Prince Street is one that urgently requires to be settled.

The new Railway Wharf wall is now completed with the exception of the jetty for the large Crane. The lower length of about 1,200 feet will be dredged out in about a fortnight's time, and the Railway

Company should then remove their traffic to this port, giving up the present Wharf for a public Wharf. The rental to be paid by the Company should also then commence. The foundations for the 35-ton Crane are well advanced and the Crane is under construction.

The new Sheds at Bathurst Wharf are completed with the exception of laying the Asphalte on the floor of enclosed sheds.

During the year the sills of Totterdown Lock have been laid to a deeper level, so as to admit of the Feeder Canal being efficiently scoured. Two pairs of new Lock Gates have been built and erected and the depth of water in the Canal has been materially improved.

### 18 September 1876

### Report of the Docks Committee to Council.

Your Committee for some time past have given the most serious attention to the necessity of re-pitching the Quays and repairing the Quay Walls — neither of these works can be longer delayed, especially the repitching the Quays, which must be brought up to the level of the streets now in process of repairs by the Sanitary Authority. The Docks Engineer estimates the cost of these works at about £9000 viz:— £4,500 for re-pitching the Quays and a similar sum for repairing and improving the levels of the Quay Walls. The expense will devolve on the City as a charge on the Wharfage rates, but to make the burthen as light as possible, your Committee propose to extend the work over four years.

### 9 October 1876

Read a Report from the Engineer as to the damage done on the 7th Instant to the upper gates of the Junction Lock by the collision therewith of the S.S. *Clio*, which occurrence very nearly led to a most serious catastrophe to the Dock Works.

And after careful investigation . . . It was resolved that with the view of preventing as far as possible the repetition of such serious risk to the Dock Works, stringent instructions in writing to the Dock Master that no vessel in future be allowed to enter or pass through the said Junction Lock, unless under the immediate superintendence of him or his Deputy.

### 23 October 1876

Messrs Spark and Mills attended as a Deputation from the Streets Improvement Committee' and stated that a sub committee of the Streets Improvement Committee had conferred with the Directors of the Great Western Railway Company with reference to the terms on which the foot and carriage tolls on Prince Street Bridge could be abolished and that the Directors are willing to accept £15,000 for their interest in foot tolls which are let at £1,100 per annum for a term of 2½ years from the 1 July upon the understanding that all the tolls both foot and carriage tolls should be abolished and that Prince Street

Bridge should be replaced by a new bridge adequate for all general traffic. (Approved).

<sup>1</sup> This was a committee of the Council.

### **30 October 1876**

The Secretary submitted a report shewing defalcations on the part of Mr G.W. Percy, junior clerk in the Secretary's Office to the extent of £691 6s. 11d. . . .<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr Percy absconded and a warrant was taken out against him. *Minutes* 6 November 1876 show the Committee employing Mr Pike, a public accountant, to investigate how the fraud committed by Mr Percy had occurred and ordering that in future security be taken for the due performance of duty by the Senior and Junior Clerks in the Secretary's Office and in the Shipping Dues Office.

### **13 November 1876**

It having been brought to the knowledge of the Committee that Steamers in the Grain Trade have been chartered for a Port in the United Kingdom calling for orders with the following clause inserted in the Charter party "Should Vessel be ordered to Bristol to discharge she is to proceed to 'Avon Dock' which is to be considered Bristol."

Resolving that the Secretary be instructed to publish in the *Shipping Gazette* and other mercantile journals . . . a letter to inform shipowners, Shippers, Merchants and others, that the Avon or Avonmouth Dock does not form part of the City of Bristol Docks, that it is distant from the centre of Bristol about  $7\frac{1}{2}$  miles by river, 10 miles by rail and 7 miles by road and is not yet open for traffic and that the insertion of such a clause in Charter Parties will have the effect of shutting out Bristol Merchants from purchasing the Cargoes of Vessels to which such Charters refer, inasmuch as it includes the vessels from the Bristol Docks.

### **20 November 1876**

It was resolved unanimously that the Bankers, Messrs Cave, Baillie & Co be requested not to make any payment or transfers or deal in any way with any of the accounts of the Dock Committee except upon orders or cheques signed by three members of the Committee and countersigned by the Secretary.

That the Bankers be also informed that the Committee observe with deep regret that the spirit if not the letter of similar instructions has not been observed by the Bankers in the transfers which have been made by them on the authority of a Junior Clerk only, whereby heavy loss has resulted to the Docks Estate.

Resolved that the Secretary be instructed to place all the Bankers pass books before the Committee at each of their weekly meetings and at the same time to submit to them a statement of the respective Balances, such statement to be afterwards entered on the minutes of

the proceedings.

Resolved that in the opinion of this Committee the senior assistant Clerk, Mr. Curnick has seriously neglected his duties inasmuch as he ought to have examined the Bankers Pass Books with the Cash Book, which if he had done carefully and regularly the frauds referred to could not have occurred and the Committee having heard Mr Curnick's explanation and to mark their sense of his neglect of duty Order that his Salary be reduced £50 a year from this date.

Resolved that the attention of the Secretary be directed to the terms of the advertisement defining his duties . . . and that he be informed that the Committee will hereafter hold him responsible for the performance, as well by himself as by his Clerks of the duties therein stated.

That the Committee do not accept the offer which the Secretary made last week to make good the amount of Mr. Percy's defalcations; but they must record it as their opinion that the Secretary has trusted too much to the Clerks, and that with stricter supervision, and probably with extended experience on his part the frauds would not have occurred.

[Railway Wharf]

Resolved that the Corporation are now and were on the 7 September last prepared to pay the sum of £10,500 to the Great Western Railway Company as directed by Mr Saunders and upon his receipt; but that the Corporation consider that the yearly rental of £2000 payable to them by the Company should commence from the notice given to them by the Town Clerk viz. the 7th September last and that the period of occupation by the Company of Wharf B should terminate at the end of six months from the same date.

Read a letter . . . from the Secretary of the Bristol Chamber of Commerce on the subject of excessive charges exacted at Bristol for Towing.

Ordered that the Haven Masters report at an early date on the present system of Charges of towing vessels between Kingroads and Ports in the Bristol Channel and Bristol; also that he submit a comparison of such charges with those prevailing at other ports, and pointing out any defects which he may consider exist in the present system, and how a better control can be exercised by this Committee in future over the said tug boats and their charges.

Ordered that the Engineer also report as to the cost and advisability of this Committee themselves undertaking the duty of towing vessels between Kingroads and Bristol, by means of a few powerful twin screw or other steam tugs.

**11 December 1876**

Ordered that a notice be put up in his office by the Haven Master, informing pilots that as the Docks Committee have reason to believe that a system prevails with some of them of taking gratuities beyond

the amount due to them for Pilotage and that instructions have been given to the Haven Master to bring the first instance of such practice that comes to his knowledge to the notice of the Committee.

### **18 December 1876**

The Haven Master submitted a statement shewing the owners name and horsepower of the various tug-boats which are in the habit of towing vessels up and down the River Avon.

Read a letter . . . from the Secretary to the General Shipowners Society, London calling the attention of this Committee to the excessive rates charged for towing on the River Avon.

### **22 December 1876 (Calendared)**

Read . . . a memorial from the Chamber of Commerce to the Board of Trade protesting against the intention of the Trinity Corporation of siting a lighthouse on Bull Point instead of Morte Stone and asking the Docks Committee to send a similar memorial (Committee agreed to do so).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Board of Trade informed the Committee that it had no power to interfere with Trinity House's selection of sites for lighthouses (*Minutes* 30 December 1876).

### **22 January 1877**

The Chairman stated that all the principal owners of tug-boats at Cardiff, Newport, Glo'ster and this port had attended at the meeting of the special sub-committee . . . to discuss the subject of the rates charged for towing from Kingroad to Bristol and vice versa and that after a lengthy discussion it had been arranged to convene another meeting . . .

The Chairman also stated that it seemed probable that Bristol owners . . . who appear to be the chief persons responsible for the present high rates charged for river towage would in the meantime consider the propriety of materially reducing the same and submit some proposal to that effect at the next meeting.

### **24 January 1877**

Read a report from the Haven Master . . . that he would at the next meeting be prepared to submit the names of 12 candidates for the office of Pilot from whom he recommended that nine be selected which would bring the total number of pilots up to 55.

### **5 February 1877**

Read a copy letter dated 30th ult. written by the Town Clerk by direction of the Cattle Plague Committee of the Council to the Veterinary Department Privy Council on . . . the insufficient accommodation . . . at this port for the detention, examination and if necessary slaughter of imported Foreign Cattle and suggesting as a

temporary arrangement that until the proper accommodation can be afforded in accordance with the requirements of the Privy Council General Order of 1875, the landing of cargoes of foreign arrivals at Bristol should be suspended.

### **12 February 1877**

The Chairman reported that the sub committee appointed on the 8th ult. had had another interview this day with the Bristol Tug owners, by whom a proposal was made to charge in future the following rates for towage from Bristol to Kingroad and vice-versa vizt.

4d per Ton where a single tug was employed

6d per Ton where two tugs were employed

6d per Ton and £5 extra where three tugs were employed

6d per Ton and £10 extra where four tugs were employed

Resolved . . . that this Committee are not at all satisfied with the small reductions suggested and that they are of opinion that a charge of 4d per ton for the first Tug with £5 extra for each additional Tug . . . would be . . . more just and proper . . .

### **Report of the Docks Committee to Council**

Your Committee report that the number of Channel Pilots in the long period which has elapsed since any were appointed, viz., upwards of 17 years has been reduced by death and retirement below 50, a number which . . . is not sufficient for the requirements of the trade of the port.

Your Committee recommend that the following persons who have been examined by the Haven Master as to their fitness for the duty . . . be appointed Pilots for the Bristol Channel:— Joseph T. Adams (39 years); James Samuel Bailey (39); Jeremiah Barry (39); John Brown (42); Edward Case (36); Edward James Craddy (33); James Haward (39); William Hunt (33); Edward Roland (40); William Russell (38); Thomas Thayer (32); Sidney G. Thomas (28).

Such appointments, if made, to be renewable on the 1st January, 1878, and thenceforward annually.

### **26 February 1877**

Read a letter from Mr. Moxley the Agent for several Bristol Tug owners stating with reference to the resolution passed by this Committee . . . his willingness to try the following still further reduced tariff . . . From Kingroad to Bristol and vice-versa 4d per ton, Extra for 2nd Tug £6 Extra for 3rd or any larger number of boats, each £5 and reserving the right again to revise the said tariff in case it should be found after a fair trial that it is not sufficiently remunerative.

Mr Payne, a Bristol tug owner, also, attended and stated his willingness to tow Steamers . . . at 4d per ton for the first tug and £5



extra for each additional tug employed and sailing vessels for 5d a ton up and 4d per ton down the River and a similar extra charge of £5 for each additional tug employed.

And after considerable discussion . . . and an expression of opinion from various members . . . that the rates ought to be still further reduced . . . it was resolved that Mr Payne be requested to confer . . . with Mr. M. Whitwell and submit a final proposal in writing.

### **12 March 1877**

With reference to the Bill now before Parliament for the purchase by the Corporation from the Great Western Railway Co. of the foot tolls at Prince St. Bridge, it was resolved that the Engineer be instructed to open negotiations at once with the Sanitary Authority as to the description and cost of the new bridge . . .

The Engineer was requested to specially take into consideration the desirability of the new bridge being arranged so as to open and shut very quickly.

Mr Payne . . . stated his willingness to agree to the following tariff vizt for towage of steamers up to Bristol 4d per ton the charge for one tug never to exceed £14 and £5 for each extra tug and for towage of steamers down the river with one tug 3d per ton, the charge with one tug never to exceed £10 and £5 for each additional tug.

Mr. Payne was requested to consider . . . whether greater reductions . . . were not possible especially [for] sailing vessels.

### **19 March 1877**

The Engineer submitted a report as to the sites . . . best adapted for landing and slaughtering foreign cattle<sup>1</sup> and a rough estimate of £2000 to £3000 as to the probable cost of the buildings . . .

And as after considerable discussion it appears that this question is beset with money difficulties and from the inquiries made at other ports that owing to the importation of dead meat the future trade in live cattle . . . is very uncertain it was resolved to postpone any action.

Read a letter from Mr. John Payne . . . the principal and older tug proprietor of this port and the owner of the only twin screw tug Boats plying on the river [setting out his charges as on 12 March entry].

<sup>1</sup> For this trade which was to become a considerable preoccupation of the Committee see R. Perren, *The meat trade in Britain, 1840–1914* (1978) chap. 7.

### **14 May 1877**

Read letters from Mr. G. Davies Secretary to the Bristol General Steam Navigation Co. and Mr. A. Wetherman Agent to Messrs Guinness & Co. detailing the serious inconvenience which is caused by the Dublin and Cork Boats of the said Company not being allotted fixed berths on the Quay. [Secretary to report on whether better

arrangements can be made].

#### **4 June 1877**

Read a letter from the Secretary to the Ariel Rowing Club asking that the boats of the said Institution may be exempted from paying the yearly boat licence of £1 0s. 6d. per Boat to the Docks estate on the ground that the Club is the only one in this neighbourhood which promotes rowing and athletic pursuits, that its boats do not ply for hire and are only in the water for about two hours of the Evening for 5 months in the year and that Bristol is the only place where such licenses are exacted. [The Committee refused the request]

#### **11 June 1877**

The Quay and Shed Committee reported that . . . regarding Mr Howard's report on a "Floating Fire Engine" it had approved of the same . . . Resolved that the said report be adopted and that a copy thereof be forwarded to the Watch Committee. Resolved also, that a Merryweather 620 gallon Engine with necessary suction pipes, 600 yards of hose etc fitted into a small iron lighter with a house as proposed by the engineer, be provided at a probable cost of about £1430 — and that with the view of preventing divided responsibility this Committee report to the Watch Committee that in their opinion it is very desirable that the Engine should be placed under the complete control of the Superintendant of the City Fire Brigade.

#### **18 June 1877**

It was determined to postpone further action [on the Floating Fire Engine] for a short time until the arrangements of the Municipal Fire Brigade were more advanced.

#### **20 June 1877**

The Chairman stated that the Sub-Committee appointed at last meeting had this day conferred with the Deputation from the Sanitary Board and after considerable discussion over the various plans for the proposed new Prince St. Bridge . . . it had been agreed unanimously that the lifting Bridge as per plan A with double hauling way. 7½ feet in width and double footway of 3 feet in width appears to be the one best adapted to meet the expected requirements both of the Docks Estate as well as those of the general public when the tolls are taken off.

And as regards the Financial position . . . whilst putting out of consideration on the one hand the loss to the Docks Estate by the carriage tolls now amounting to about £653 gross, and on the other hand the cost to the City by the purchase of the foot tolls for £15,000 and it being doubtful whether the Sanitary Authority can contribute from the Rates to the first cost of the Bridge altho' they may contribute to its repairs and maintenance.

It was unanimously agreed by both Sub-Committees that the Bridge shall be erected by the Docks Committee at a cost of about £4,500 and shall be worked by that Committee and that the Sanitary Authority shall pay an annual sum of £400 to the Docks Estate in aid of the cost of repairs and maintenance.

### **16 July 1877**

Read a report from the Secretary as to the loss of revenue which has fallen on the City and Docks Estate by the diversion of trade, chiefly grain, to the Avonmouth Docks during the last three months, and suggesting the measures which occur to him as desirable . . . in order to put the City Docks in a position to compete fairly with those on both sides of the entrance to the river.

Resolved that the Secretary's Report be referred to the Sheds Committee with instructions to report as soon as possible.

1st as to the further facilities (if any) that should be afforded for the special use of the grain trade as regards the creation of Granaries.

2nd As to the extent to which the restrictions now imposed by the Bye Laws as respects the periods during which Grain may be deposited in the Sheds and on certain portions of the quays either free of charge, or subject to a charge, may be relaxed in favour of that trade.

### **23 July 1877**

Read a letter from the Secretary to the Veterinary Department Privy Council . . . stating that the landing places, lairs, and other places used for Foreign Animals must be so situated as to be perfectly isolated, so that no risk may be incurred of foreign stock coming in contact with home bred animals.

The Engineer submitted plans for lairs for Foreign Cattle, and pointed out that the Bonded yard of about  $4\frac{1}{4}$  acres . . . to north of Cumberland Basin belonging to the Society of Merchant Venturers, and the yard immediately to north of the Hydraulic Engine House by Junction Lock of about  $\frac{3}{4}$  an acre (now leased by Messrs Jones and Nash) appear to be the only sites available for the purpose.

A deputation from the chief Purveyors of the City then waited on the Committee and presented the following memorial. (Calendared)

Thomas Day, John Huru, James Pritchard, William Trull, William Bryant, G.G. Babbage, Wm. Terrett and Samuel Dolman, representatives of the purveyors, request the Committee to co-operate with the Merchant Venturers to provide for the import of foreign cattle which will bring to Bristol the competition necessary to reduce to the consumer the 'already expensive commodity so necessary to the requirements of our local artizan population'.

The Chairman then pointed out to the deputation the two great difficulties *viz.* first, a suitable site and secondly the great expense which the Privy Council requirements will entail. The Committee were aware of the importance of the matter and were negotiating for

a site.<sup>1</sup>

A letter from C.H. Law, Secretary to the Bristol Timber Importers Association, pointed out the great inequality in the rates presently charged on Boards compared with those on Deals and asked that a large reduction may be made to prevent the former trade being transferred to Avonmouth Docks.

<sup>1</sup> The Merchant Venturers were willing to grant the Corporation a lease of part of the Bonded Yard adjoining the Chapel not exceeding two acres for 14 years at a rental of £100 per acre per annum (*Minutes* 30 July 1877).

### 13 August 1877

The Quay and Shed Committee recommended that as a temporary measure the Secretary be authorised to allow cargoes to be landed as follows *viz.* that Grain be allowed to be stacked in the Sheds at Princes and Bathurst free for Seven Days a charge of 5d. for 25 sacks or hundred bushels per week be made and that Grain be allowed to be stacked on certain portions of the Quays free for 7 days, a charge of 2d. per 25 sacks or 100 bushels per week be made for the first week and 4d. per week after the expiration of 14 days from landing.

Read a Report from the Engineer . . . pointing out the best sites for a Foreign Cattle trade at this port and the opinion of the Privy Council officials thereon giving particulars of his visit to the Foreign Cattle Depot at Deptford and also the large cattle markets at the North of London.

It was resolved that site no 1 lying between the new Entrance to the Cumberland Basin and Brunel's Lock be adopted as a Depot for landing Canadian and American cattle and that the Engineer be instructed to get out plans for the erection of such buildings of a temporary nature as will best combine efficiency with economy and enable the consent of the Privy Council and a licence to be obtained.<sup>1</sup>

And with reference to the largely increased imports Ordered that the Engineer report at his leisure on the whole question and cost of better accommodation for the petroleum trade at this port.

<sup>1</sup> Two letters followed from the Veterinary Department of the Privy Council, the first stating that it was not prepared to sanction the landing of foreign animals close to a landing place used for Irish cattle, and the second rejecting the Committee's proposals for accommodating the foreign animals trade. The Committee, fearing further loss of general trade if a site was not speedily provided, decided to send a deputation to the Veterinary Department (*Minutes* 27 August and 1 October 1877).

### 5 October 1877

The Town Clerk reported that the Governor, Deputy Governor, assistants and Guardians of the Poor [had assessed the Port] for poor rates at 2s. 2½ in the pound amounting to £3993 2. 2.

Resolved that the Town Clerk be instructed to employ Counsel . . . with a view to appealing against or resisting payment of such rate.

**15 October 1877**

Read a report from the Secretary as the result of his interview with Mr. C.L. Peel and Professor Browne of the Veterinary Department:—  
From which it would appear

- 1st That the Privy Council are against sanctioning at present any more Foreign Cattle Depots in the United Kingdom and for this reason refused to sanction the site between the Locks.
- 2ndly That the Privy Council are not likely to approve of the Bonded Yard or the site between the Entrance Locks . . . on account of their proximity to the Irish Cattle landing places.
- 3rdly That the site offered by the Avonmouth Dock Coy. is considered a very suitable one for an American Cattle Depot and will probably be sanctioned as such by the Privy Council provided the local authority of Gloucestershire offer no objection.
- 4thly That if an American cattle depot is established at Avonmouth the Privy Council are not likely to sanction a similar depot at Bristol.
- 5thly That if the site at Avonmouth is disapproved of by the Local Authority it may be well for the Bristol Docks Committee to apply again for the sanction of the Privy Council to some other site at Bristol or failing that at Portishead.

Resolved that further action be deferred until it is known what the Local Authority report on as to the site offered at Avonmouth.

Resolved that Mr. John Ward Girdlestone<sup>1</sup> be appointed Assistant Engineer under Mr Howard at a Salary of £350 per annum. The Committee desire to record their decided opinion that in the event of any vacancy occurring in the office of Docks Engineer, the appointment now made be not considered as giving that gentleman any claim moral or otherwise to fill the vacant appointment.

<sup>1</sup> He eventually succeeded Howard as Engineer. For a brief appreciation of his career see R.A. Buchanan, *Nineteenth century engineers in the port of Bristol*, pp 15-6.

**29 October 1877**

Read the following correspondence in *re* the Portishead Docks undertaking (Calendared)

Letter to the Assistant Secretary, Harbour Department, Board of Trade 11 October 1877 detailing the extensions granted by the Board for completion of Portishead Dock and requesting a further extension of six months following a conference at the Board with Mr. Jennings. Signed James Ford, George R. Woodward, Frank McLean, Lewis Fry and Richard Fudge, Directors, Bristol and Portishead Pier and Railway Co.

Letter to William Brice, Town Clerk, from Frank C. Stileman,<sup>1</sup> 23 Great George St. Westminster, 11 October 1877 stating that there is over £35,000 cash at the bankers to the credit of the Portishead Dock

Co. showing that lack of money has not delayed construction. The main cause was a failure of the coffer dam which resulted in large quantities of Severn mud being deposited at the site whose removal presented great difficulties and delayed the masonry work for the Dock and Lock. The soft mud made close timbering of the foundations essential. The Lock gates and machinery will soon be finished and the caisson has been built. Delays also arose from difficulties with the men, especially the masons.

Letter to William Brice, Town Clerk, from W. Proctor Baker, William Hathway, John Parry, Frederick Terrell and William Pethick (Directors of the Portishead Co. appointed by Bristol city council) stating that ample funds were always available to complete the project and failure to do so arose from the circumstances stated above by the Engineer.

Letter to William Brice, Town Clerk, from William Pethick (Director) 20 October 1877 stating that an unusually wet summer had caused delay. This might have been reduced if the contractor had worked double gangs during favourable weather and the personal services of the Engineer had been more regularly available.

Resolved that this Committee have no reason to offer to the Council why the request made by Messrs Ford and others should not be granted.

<sup>1</sup> He was the engineer for the Portishead Co.

### **5 November 1877**

With reference to the increasing trade in fruit and other bonded goods from foreign ports and to the expense of weighing etc and delay which importers are subject to at present when they require to again export such goods in bond. Ordered that the Secretary make formal application to the Hon.ble Commissioners of H.M. Customs that all the privileges that have been granted . . . to the ports of London, Liverpool, Hull etc may in like manner [be extended to] Bristol City Docks.

### **13 November 1877**

Resolved unanimously that Mr. George Wills be appointed Chairman. Letter from Mr. Alderman Ford to William Brice Town Clerk

My first impulse at the debate on the appointment of the Docks Committee today was to withdraw my name from the list; but when the Council confirmed the appointment by a large majority, a deference to the wishes and opinions of that majority, and my own natural reluctance to sever a connection, which had existed for very many years, made me hesitate, on reflection, however, and after giving due weight to the fact, that the Corporation are half owners of the Portishead Docks, I feel inasmuch as those Docks (of which my Directorship is not optional) will in a few months be seeking for Shipping Traffic. it will be better to relieve myself from a position,

which may become anomalous and embarrassing.

I shall therefore be obliged if you will erase my name from the list of the Docks Committee.

Resolved unanimously that the Town Clerk do write and request Mr Alderman Ford to reconsider his decision . . . and also inform him that it is the earnest wish of this Committee that he will not cease to act as a member of this Board.

Resolved unanimously that the best thanks of this Committee are due and are hereby presented to Mr C Nash and Mr Alderman Ford for the ability and courtesy with which they have filled the offices of Chairman and Vice Chairman during the last and many past years.

The Committee with deep regret acknowledge the weighty reasons which have induced Messrs Nash and Ford to retire from the more responsible duties of the Committee.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Alderman Ford was Chairman of the Portishead Co. and Alderman Nash was Deputy-Chairman of the Avonmouth Co.

### **19 November 1877**

Letter from Mr Alderman Ford to Mr Brice

Since the receipt of your letter I have given the subject careful further consideration and I assure you, it is with much regret that I find myself unable to come to any other than my previous conclusion.

Read a report from the Engineer recommending that the Committee purchase from Messrs Merryweather one of their 620 gallon Fire Engines and place it on board a tug boat of about 48 feet in length and 10 feet beam which would probably be best obtained from some Bristol firm, the expense of the tug and fire engine complete being as he estimates about £1,800 and the annual cost of maintenance about £609.

Resolved that a copy of the above report be forwarded to the Watch Committee and in view of the great assistance which such a tug and fire Engine could render in case of a fire occurring in any of the large buildings abutting on the Floating Harbour they be asked [if] they will bear a portion of the first cost as well as the annual expense for its proper maintenance.<sup>1</sup>

Ordered that the Haven Master submit on every Monday a statement showing the date, names, register tonnage, description and approximate draught of all vessels which have entered Avonmouth Dock during the previous week, also the actual tide at H.W. Cumberland Basin on each date respectively.

<sup>1</sup> Nothing seems to have come of this proposal at this time. The Watch Committee decided to postpone consideration until February 1878 when the Water Co. will be providing an increased supply of water. No such consideration took place (*Watch Committee Proceedings* 28 November 1877 *passim*).

### **26 November 1877**

Read again the letter from Messrs Whitwill & Coy. referred to at last

meeting re remission of a moiety of dues paid on Goods from Foreign [parts] transhipped coastwise.

Ordered that further discussion on this important question be deferred until the Secretary can report as to the extent and circumstances under which such goods are at present transhipped at Bristol and also as to the probable effect on the Docks Revenues of remitting the present Dues on them either wholly or in part.

Read a report from the Traffic Manager . . . pointing out the need for further warehouse and rail accommodation close to the water, in order to enable the City Docks to compete successfully with the Avonmouth Docks.

Ordered that the Engineer . . . inform the Committee as to whether it is possible to give any further facilities at the City Docks for landing and storing grain cargoes.

### **3 December 1877**

Read a report from the Water Bailiff showing the number of vessels which have been lying up in the Floating Harbour for long periods and stating the great difficulty he has in berthing such vessels and asking the orders of the Committee as to how he is to deal with such vessels in future.

Ordered that further discussion be deferred until the Town Clerk has reported as to whether there is any legal method by which this grave abuse of the Dock accommodation can be obviated or frustrated.

### **10 December**

Read a final report from the Engineer as to the form of bridge best adapted to the Princes Street Pier . . . and after hearing from [him] the respective advantages and disadvantages of a Lift, Swing and Draw or Rolling Bridge, it was unanimously resolved . . . to adopt the Swing Bridge with a timber jetty placed to the East of the North Pier.

### **Report of the Docks Committee to Council**

Your Committee have for some time past had under consideration . . . making an alteration respecting the qualifications and licensing of Pilots in consequence of the complete change . . . in the circumstances under which the Pilots are now called upon to navigate vessels in the River viz, the introduction of steam towing and the increase in the size of vessels.

Your Committee . . . have come to the conclusion that any general withdrawal of the existing license or interference with the full exercise of the privileges which they confer would not be desirable. Your Committee . . . make the following recommendations

1. That the licenses of the existing Pilots be continued as at present



2. That a grade of Second Class Pilots be established
3. That all Pilots be in the first instance appointed Second Class Pilots
4. That Candidates for appointment as Pilots must be at least 25, and not more than 35 years, must produce satisfactory certificates of conduct and sobriety, must have served 7 years in a Bristol Pilot Skiff, or 5 years in a Bristol Pilot Skiff and 2 years in a steamer sailing constantly out of the Bristol Docks and must satisfy the Haven Master as to their knowledge of the Bristol Channel and River Avon: that they are able to take charge of a vessel either underweigh or at anchor in a tideway, that they are thoroughly acquainted with the 'rule of the road' and able to read a chart.
5. That Second Class Pilots be licensed to act within the same limits as the present Pilots except that they shall not pilot sailing ships exceeding 700 tons register, or steamers exceeding 500 tons register between the Holmes and the Docks at Avonmouth, Portishead, or Bristol and those Docks and the Holmes.
6. That Second Class Pilots be not promoted until the Haven Master has reported as to their proved capacity and conduct.

Your Committee also recommend that any of present Pilots . . . desire to be relieved of the heavy responsibility of piloting large vessels . . . may be granted licenses as Second Class Pilots without any further examination.

## **Docks Committee Minutes Book Vol. 9**

### **7 January 1878–11 April 1881**

#### **7 January 1878**

Read a letter from E.G. Dogett, Clerk to the Incorporation of the Poor.

##### **Docks Rating**

In doing what they have been advised by eminent counsel it is their duty to do, the Guardians have acted in their accustomed manner. They were not actuated by any motive having the faintest affinity to a feeling of hostility. In the first place the question they had to deal with was one of dry law and in the second place one of dry figures.

They are of opinion that if an amicable conclusion be desired there need be no difficulty . . . and they have therefore resolved.

That this Board will be glad to receive any communication from the Town Clerk . . . with the view to an amicable arrangement. [The Committee approved the Town Clerk's reply stating that the legal points must be settled by a legal tribunal]

#### **14 January 1878**

The Town Clerk reported that the appeals by the Corporation against the Corporation of the Poor . . . had been tried before the Recorder on the 10th, 11th and 12th January and that both the appeals had been allowed with costs.

Resolved that the warmest thanks of the Committee be given to the Town Clerk . . . Resolved that gratuities of 50 guineas each be presented to Mr Howard, Mr Girdlestone and Mr Burgers in recognition of the extremely valuable assistance those gentlemen have rendered the Town Clerk . . . that a gratuity of 10 guineas be paid to the Town Clerk to be distributed amongst the junior clerks in his office, 15 guineas to Mr Howard [for his] clerks and 10 guineas to Mr. Girdlestone [for his] clerks.

#### **18 February 1878**

Resolved that Sir W. Armstrong & Cos. Tender for £3,400 for the Iron Work and hydraulic machinery [for the new Prince Street Bridge] be accepted.

#### **11 March 1878**

Read a report from the Finance Committee

1st as to the probable Financial position of the Docks Estate on the 1st May . . . there will be a General cash Balance to be carried forward to the credit of next years account of £6,130.

Of this balance there will probably be about £200 only actually in the Bank.

The Finance Committee beg to point out that on the 1st May

£5,100 Interest on Dock Bonds will have to be met. Unless therefore the Revenue improves the Bank account may have to be overdrawn for a short time to the extent of perhaps this amount.

2ndly As to the receipts and Expenditure during the ensuing Financial Year ending 30 April 1879. Assuming that the receipts of the current Financial year will be maintained, there will be a Revenue from all sources including the above Balance of £6,130 carried forward of £66,438 after very careful consideration the Ordinary Expenditure for maintenance and repairs of works salaries, rates and taxes, rent charges, Interest on Dock Bonds etc. is estimated at £55,059 — leaving a clear balance of . . . £11,379.

But of this sum the following Expenditure for new Works already mentioned by the Committee and now under execution by Contract have to be met viz.

For River and Harbour Improv <sup>t</sup> Work	£ 2,000
Bedminster Bridge	£ 300
Making with the Total ordinary Expenditure	£55,059

---

63,009

and having therefore a balance of £3,429

Resolved that this Report be approved and adopted.

## **25 March 1878**

The Town Clerk reported that he had received a letter from Mr. Trevor, Assistant Secretary to the Board of Trade, Harbour Dept, enclosing a copy of a memorial addressed to him by Messrs Ford and others, 5 Directors of the Portishead Docks undertaking asking in consequence of a serious accident to the Dock Walls on the 18th inst. as certified to by Mr. Stileman, the Engineer to the works, that the time allowed for completing the Docks might be further extended for eight months, from 8th May 1878.

## **29 April 1878**

### **Report of the Docks Committee to Council**

The Justices have ordered and appointed that £12,228 13s. 5d. shall be deemed to be the amount so raiseable [by a rate of 4d. in the pound] for the purposes of [the Bristol Dock Act, 1848].

Your Committee have estimated the amount of the charge for the year commencing the 1st May 1878 imposed on the Borough Fund . . . at £12,000.

Your Committee think it right to point out to the Council that the reason they have considered it necessary to recommend the raising of a larger sum than £10,000, the amount which has been found sufficient for the last two or three years, is that they have had to consider in making their estimates the expenses which will be incurred during the coming year in carrying out several exceptional works, particularly in the erection of the new Prince Street Bridge; and also in additional works to strengthen Bedminster Bridge. The expense of completing and fitting up the large newly-erected Goods

Shed on Princes Wharf will also press on the revenues of the current year. The extraordinary outlay to be thus provided for will be not less than £10,000.

Your Committee regret to add that the probable receipts of revenue for the year ending 30 April will shew a deficiency of about £4000 as compared with the year ending 30 April 1877, in consequence of the severe depression in trade which has so long existed, and which presents no immediate prospect of improvement. The loss on sugar, in consequence of local misfortunes, accounts for a considerable part of this deficit.

Although your Committee are now in receipt of the sum of £2000 per annum, the amount of the yearly payment made by the G.W.R. Company [for] the accommodation provided for them at the new Wharf, it is clear to your Committee that in order to maintain the Dock Estate, the unusual and it is hoped temporary demand now made on the rates is necessary.

### 6 May 1878

Read a Privy Council order sanctioning the landing of [foreign] cattle at Avonmouth.

### 13 May 1878

Read a letter from the Haven Master 13 May 6 a.m. 1878.

Having examined the position of the [Waterford] Steamer *Gypsy*<sup>1</sup> early this morning I find she is an almot total obstruction of the River with her back broken. She must be *taken to pieces* where she is without a moments delay. For the purpose I have sent a hurried line (written in the Boat in pencil) to the Docks Engineers Office, stating that the following is required

1. Steam Tug and 2 barges; 2 leading Men or foremen; 6 Riggers, 25 Laborers; 3 Engineers (to take the Engine to pieces); 3 Shipwrights 25 Boiler Makers.

I think the above would be enough . . . Several Water Police should be in constant attendance.

I would suggest that your Committee of today *continue sitting* and that they sit at Captain Green's Office, a quorum meeting daily there would be a great help to expediting matters.

(Signed) E.P. Parsons.

P.S. The stern must first be removed. I think we might if not time be lost have a passage clear tomorrow afternoon for all but the largest vessels.

Resolved that the action taken by the Haven Master be approved . . . and that the Corporation take possession of such vessel and the tackle, equipment cargo, stores and ballast of same and raise, remove and destroy the whole or any part thereof and light and buoy the same . . . in pursuance of the powers conferred by the *Removal of Wrecks Act 1877*.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For a lengthy report on the grounding of the *Gypsy* see *Western Daily Press* 13 May 1878.

<sup>2</sup> 40 and 41 Vict. cap. xvi.

## 20 May 1878

The Committee record their satisfaction at the success with which the free passage of the River was so soon restored . . . and desire to thank Captn. Parsons R.N. the Haven Master and Mr. J.W. Girdlesstone, in the unavoidable absence of the Engineer . . . for the zeal and ability with which the operations have been hitherto conducted.

Resolved that this Committee do hold an inquiry as to the stranding of the *Gypsy*.

## 27 May 1878

The Secretary stated that the salvage of the Cargo of the wreck which has been brought up and deposited in the Princes Wharf Sheds. The Haven Master also reported that the Navigation had been kept open even at extreme neap tides, and that the freshets in the River had greatly interfered with operators but notwithstanding this and other difficulties fair progress had been made.

Read a letter from Letitia Roberts asking assistance from the Committee on account of the loss of her husband from the effects of an accident whilst engaged in clearing the bank of the river near the wreck of the S.S. *Gipsy*.

[Secretary authorised to pay her £50]

Read a letter from Mr. S.B. Ward Solicitor asking for compensation for his client Edwin Wilson who was seriously injured by a piece of iron from the wreck of the SS *Gipsy* by an explosion of dynamite.

[referred to Town Clerk to deal with]

## 3 June 1878

The Haven Master reported that both boilers had been removed, one slightly injured, the other intact from the SS *Gypsy* . . . and that the greater portion of what is still lying sunken in the Fairway Channel will probably have been removed by Wednesday next.

[Committee accept Engineer's advice that it is not worth trying to float the fore portion with a view to selling it. Instead a contract with John Kington to break it up is entered into.]

The Secretary submitted a rough statement of the expenses incurred at the Wreck of the *Gipsy* up to date amounting to £2330.

The said master [Mr. U.J. Burns of the *Gipsy*] who was in attendance with a model of the vessel stated that the night of the accident was dark but clear that a very dark shade was thrown over the water from the bank, that when the vessel struck, he was under the impression she was well in the Fairway Channel, that he then put the Engines full speed astern, that the vessel refused however to move, that he got a rope out to keep her starboard quarter into the Gloucestershire Bank. That she listed over very quickly on the tide

feel, notwithstanding that the port boiler was blown off, and the deck cargo shifted to the starboard side, that at 5 a.m. the tide being half ebb, and the vessel then having listed so much as to make him fear she would turn right over, he let go the rope above referred to with the idea that she would go across the river ground and get more on an even keel and lift as the flood made.

That he sent for tugs and other assistance which owing to its being Sunday were slow in coming and that he then did all he could to batten down the hatches etc. That unfortunately when the flood made and after she had lifted considerably owing to the weight of water in the crank hatch, the cattle ventilators burst, then the whole of the after part of the vessel, and it was owing to this weight of water of over 500 tons that the vessel subsequently broke her back and became a total wreck.

Resolved that this Committee are of opinion that the stranding of the *Gipsy* was occasioned by an error of judgement on the part of her master.

#### 24 June 1878

Mr. Proctor Baker called the attention of the Committee to the serious loss of grain trade which will fall on the City Docks, if further waterside warehousing . . . is not speedily provided.

#### 1 July 1878

The Chairman was requested to meet the Directors of the Channel Dock Coy. with the view to ascertaining whether in case the Corporation agree to make a reduction on the Tonnage Dues proportionate to the space taken up by live Cattle on board such vessels as discharge live stock at Avonmouth and then come on to Bristol with the remainder of their cargo, the Channel Dock Coy. will make a remission to the same extent in the tonnage dues charged by them or the same vessels.

#### 8 July 1878

The Chairman reported that [the Channel Dock] Coy. declined to make any reduction . . . It was moved by the Chairman that a remission not exceeding  $\frac{1}{4}$  be made in the tonnage dues charged Messrs Whitwell & Coy's steamers *Arragon* [sic] and *Cornwall* . . . and that a similar reduction be made in all future cases.

Mr. W. Pethick moved an amendment viz. That this Committee will be prepared to consider making a proportionate allowance in the Tonnage Dues of vessels landing cattle at Avonmouth so soon as the Channel Dock are prepared to make a reduction.

The said amendment being put to the vote was lost by a majority of One [crossed out and initialled GW]

Mr. Pethick moved that the Town Clerk be asked to give his opinion as to the legality of members voting on questions in which

they have a pecuniary interest, which was carried. [Town Clerk ruled that it was not legal to do so].

Mr. C.B. Hare then moved an amendment that  $\frac{1}{4}$  remission [be granted].

And on a division [Messrs Jones, Wait, Whitwell and Miles being shareholders in the said vessels abstained from voting] the amendment was carried by a majority.

Mr. W. Pethick then gave notice that he should call the attention of the Town Council to this subject.<sup>1</sup>

The Water Bailiff was ordered to take prompt measures to prevent the firing of any guns on board vessels or from the Quay on the occasion of H.R.H. The Prince of Wales' visit to this City.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Another application for remission of  $\frac{1}{4}$  tonnage dues on vessels landing foreign cattle at Avonmouth (which had the exclusive privilege of such trade) was received. A motion to grant remission was proposed; an amendment to refer the matter to full council was lost; but an amendment that no remission be granted until the Avonmouth Dock Co. did likewise was carried (*Minutes* 22 July 1878).

<sup>2</sup> For an account of this see J. Latimer, *op. cit.* pp 502-5.

## 29 July 1878

### Annual Report and statement of Accounts for the year ending April 30 1878.

The Total Revenue from all sources	£61,367	11	0
The Total Expenditure has been			
For Maintenance, Dredging, Salaries etc	£21,992	6	2
Rent Charge, Interest etc	£37,065	0	6
River and Harbour Improvements as			
per Account No 3	£10,104	12	1
Making an excess of Expenditure over Receipts of	£ 7,794	7	9

The Revenue for the year has been unfavorably affected chiefly by the continued stoppage of the Counterslip Sugar Refinery, the blockade of the Black Sea Ports, and the general depression of trade; together with keep competition at the Docks at Avonmouth and Sharpness.

The Expenditure has been heavier this year in consequence of extra repairs being necessary, and also to an increased amount of Dredging.

Wood Goods from the North of Europe, and Grain, Oil Cake, Provisions and Mineral Oils from the United States are the only trades in which there has been any considerable increase.

[After reporting its failure to persuade the Privy Council to sanction a site for landing foreign cattle; the Committee reports] The result is that the Dock Estate not only loses the advantages derived from the cattle trade, but is exposed to the injury which may and probably will be occasioned by its diverting other traffic to the Avonmouth Dock which has been approved by the Privy Council as a landing place for Cattle from the United States and Canada.

The new Quay and Shed Regulations continue to work well. The

large open Shed lately erected on the Welsh Back has proved of great service to the small steam traders from the Welsh ports, whilst without the splendid extended sheds on Bathurst and Prince's Wharves the present American grain and provision trades could not possibly have been conducted. More Sheds are urgently wanted on the old City Quays for the accommodation of the Irish Steamers, as well for the French Wine and Sugar Traders.

In considering the best means for supplying further shed accommodation due regard has been paid to the question of laying down a system of Tramways to be worked by horse power, between certain portions of the old Quays and the Harbour Railway via the new Princes Street Bridge. Enquiries are now being made as to the relative cost of moving goods from the Quays by such proposed Tramways, with the present system of barging and hauling . . .

The New Prince Street Bridge will it is hoped be in position by the 1st October next. The abolition of the tolls will then take place.

The raising and repitching of 3,500 square yards of the Quays, and raising and recoping with heavy granite of 220 yards of frontage wall have been effected during the year [making] a vast improvement.

#### **Report of the Docks Committee on Additional Shed Accommodation**

Your Committee recommend that a Shed of an area of about 8,748 square feet . . . be erected on the Narrow Quay, opposite Currant Lane at a cost of £1,945 [to] be generally available for the Irish Steamers, which frequently at present discharge and take in their Cargoes from the open Quays.

Your Committee also recommend that a closed Shed of about 5,570 square feet be erected on the Quay immediately to the Eastward Drawbridge at a cost of about £1,570. A shed of this description is much needed by the French Wine and Sugar Traders.

Your Committee find by reference to the Treasurer's Account that the sums received and paid by him in respect of Wharfage Dues during the last 10 years amount to

	Amount received	Amount expended	Surplus
1869	£4,263	£1,275	£2,988
1870	5,574	1,891	3,683
1871	5,168	2,099	3,069
1872	5,726	1,808	3,918
1873	6,349	1,661	4,688
1874	6,377	1,424	4,953
1875	6,120	2,100	4,020
1876	7,257	1,814	5,443
1877	6,778	3,638	3,140
1878	6,342	3,400	2,942

During the same period a sum of £131,320 has been expended out of the Dock Estate on the Prince and Bathurst Wharves, including the



extensive sheds, and it is chiefly in consequence that the receipts for Wharfage Dues have so largely increased.

Your Committee consider that the expense of erecting the new sheds should be borne by the City out of the amounts to be received for Wharfage.

### **12 August 1878**

The Engineer reported that the large 35 ton Steam Crane had now been tested with the proof load of 45 Tons which it lifted and swung round satisfactorily.

### **21 October 1878**

The Haven Master reported the complete removal of the forepart of the wreck of the *Gypsy*.

### **11 November 1878**

That Mr. Geo Wills be Chairman and Mr. C.B. Hare Deputy Chairman.

Resolved that this Committee desired to express their regret that circumstances have arisen to deprive them of the assistance of their late Colleagues, Messrs. Nash, Thomas, Taylor and Whitwill, and to acknowledge the services which these gentlemen rendered during their long tenures of office.<sup>1</sup>

### **Report of the Docks Committee to Council**

In Consequence of the alteration of the laws as to the importation of foreign animals effected by the *Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act*,<sup>2</sup> 1878 . . . your Committee have entered into negotiations with the Great Western Railway for the hire of a piece of vacant ground adjoining the Harbour Railway Wharf . . . as a foreign animals wharf . . . Your Committee hope . . . to obtain a share of the important and increase trade in live cattle and sheep for home consumption now carried on between America and the Continent of Europe and the United Kingdom.

<sup>1</sup> These four members were removed from the Committee as being directors of the Avonmouth Co. after Alderman Proctor Baker had carried a proposal in Council that such directors should not be appointed to the Docks Committee (W.G. Neale, *op cit* p 87).

<sup>2</sup> 41 and 42 Vict. cap. lxxiv.

### **18 November 1878**

Alderman Wall gave notice that he should move the following Resolution at the next meeting viz, That the Rates and Charges made by the Avonmouth Dock Coy. be fully considered with a view to ascertain what steps should be taken to meet and counteract if possible the increasing competition now taking place.

**25 November 1878**

The Finance Committee reported that £1,645 14s. 4d. remained due to the Docks Estate for the expenses of removing the wreck [of the *S.S. Gipsy*].

Read a memorial signed by many of the leading merchants in Bristol complaining of the delay in the completion of Prince St Bridge, and urging that the work may be pushed on night and day.

**2 December 1878**

In accordance with the notice given by him Alderman Wall moved as follows

That with a view to induce Vessels of upwards of 500 tons Register from Foreign Ports, to come up to Bristol, the following preliminary regulations be adopted *viz.* That the Towage charges from Kingroad to Cumberland Basin and vice-versa, be allowed, and that, if satisfactory arrangements cannot be made with the present Tug Owners, the Engineer be directed to ascertain on what terms he can hire for twelve months, six powerful Tug Boats for the navigation of the Bristol River, with the option to purchase at a fixed price at the expiration of the term for hiring.

That in order to secure any cargoes that may offer the Secretary be invested with discretionary power to make special arrangements as to warehousing.

Resolved that the [above] questions be referred to a Special sub-Committee.

Read a letter from Mr. A.H. Bowman Junior Clerk in the Office of Collector of Dues asking as he is about to enter the University of Durham, that he may be allowed to resign . . . accepted.

**23 December 1878**

Read a letter from the Secretary to the Privy Council, Veterinary Department to the Town Clerk informing him that the Lords of the Council approve the site for the Foreign Cattle Depot.

With reference to the present severe weather the Engineer was authorized to employ a Steamer or take any other steps necessary to prevent the Floating Harbour being frozen over.

Resolve that this Committee do agree to undertake the management and control of all the Cranes on the Quays and to account to the Treasurer for the receipts and expenditure on account thereof.

**20 January 1879**

The Engineer reported that he hoped the new Prince Street Bridge would be in a sufficiently advanced state to be opened for Traffic on the 27 inst.

The Secretary reported that owing to the wretched accommodation afforded to the Petroleum and Naptha trade at Morgan's Pill, the *Agnes* and *Eliza* with cargoes for Bristol consignees have been

diverted to Avonmouth, and that if better accommodation was not provided at once, this trade would be probably permanently diverted from the City Docks.

Resolved that the Town Clerk be directed to prepare such an amendment in the Bye Laws made under the *Petroleum Act 1871* as will enable cargoes coming under that Act to be landed at Cumberland Basin, Brunel's Lock and the creek near Clift House.

### 10 February 1879

Mr. Wm. Smith gave notice that he should move on Monday the 10th March next. that considering

- 1st The success of the Avonmouth Docks as an Engineering work is now established.
- 2nd In order to cheapen the cost of transport of Goods the shipowners continue to build vessels of larger and larger dimensions.
- 3rd The Navigation of the River Avon cannot be made convenient for such vessels, and that even if this were possible the immediate access to the Avonmouth Docks at almost all hours would still afford a great saving in time as compared with the Bristol Docks.
- 4th Consignees are able to make a great saving in the cost of handling their goods at Avonmouth compared with the cost to them in the Bristol Docks, as at Avonmouth the Midland Railway as well as the Great Western Railway are brought to the ships side which is not the case in Bristol.
- 5th By this increase in the number of larger vessels that the commercial value of the Avonmouth Docks may be expected to be largely developed.
- and Lastly, considering the very large money Interest which the Rate Payers of Bristol have in the Bristol Docks Estate and their consequent liability in respect of it, in the opinion of the Docks Committee in order to prevent any needless or wasteful competition between the two undertakings it is desirable that the Avonmouth Docks should at as early a date as possible form part of the Bristol Docks Estate, if procurable on equitable terms, and that a recommendation to this effect be made to the Corporation.

Read a report from the Engineer giving estimates for sheds at South side of Cumberland Basin viz

For one of 120 feet in length for the Waterford Boat £1000 if with tiled roof or £1050 if with slated roof — and for one of 140 feet for the Cork Boat £1,120 — if with tiled roof or £1,170 if with slated roof.

Whereupon the Secretary was directed to inform the agents of the above Boats that this Committee are prepared to give orders for the immediate erection of and to grant them the exclusive use of either such shed for one year on their agreeing to pay a rent equivalent to 6 p. cent on its gross cost.

**24 February 1879**

The Town Clerk called the attention of the Committee to an advertisement in the *Bristol Daily Times and Mirror* of the 13th inst. giving notice of a special general meeting of the holders of the separate share capital of the Portishead Docks undertaking for the purpose of authorizing the creation and issue of shares of stock under the powers of the Portishead Docks Act 1878.

Alderman Baker stated that the 5 Corporation Directors were unaware of the terms on which it was proposed to issue new Capital and also that the new Dock wall would probably be even stronger than the original one, and that the repairs and work generally had all been done in the best style, and that the Dock Wall would be finished, weather permitting in 14 days time.

After considerable discussion and in view of the Company having afforded this Committee no information as to the terms on which they propose to issue the new Shares it was Resolved

That in the opinion of this Committee the additional Capital to be created under the Portishead Dock Act 1878 shall not be entitled to Dividend in respect of the Profits of any one year until a Dividend after the Rate of 3 per cent shall have been provided for in respect of that year in respect of the share Capital issued under the Portishead Docks Act 1871.

The Haven Master reported the complete removal of the forepart of the wreck of the *Gipsy*.

**17 March 1879**

The Engineer reported that he had arranged with a firm in London to afford them engine power upon their trying some experiments at their own expense with the Electric Light from the Suspension Bridge by which some information might be obtained as to the effect of such means of illumination in the Navigation of the River.<sup>1</sup>

Letter from Messrs. C. Hill and Sons informing the Committee that they have 2 large steamers in course of construction for the American Trade<sup>2</sup> to the Bristol Channel and asking what special facilities by remission of Dock Dues, help in the matter of River Towage charges, and fixed berth and shed accommodation this Committee will offer so as to enable them to compete with those boats which run to Avonmouth Dock.

Whereupon the Secretary was directed to inform Messrs. Hill & Sons that the whole question of Dock Dues and charges is now under consideration and that the Committee are not in a position therefore to give a definite reply to their application.

Mr. W. Smith moved, That it is desirable . . . that the City should purchase the Avonmouth Dock. Mr. Dunlop seconded [consideration adjourned until 7 April] [Printed 11 pages statement dated 17 March by Mr. William Smith in support of his motion Calendared]

That a conflict of interest between the Docks has arisen is clear, for many vessels that might have come up to Bristol have preferred to

discharge their cargoes at Avonmouth.

Gradually an enormous export trade in farm produce from America to England has sprung up and this produce is chiefly carried by Ocean Steamers. The following are the statistics of the trade

	1858	1868	1878
Live Cattle, Sheep and Pigs	£ 1,390,068	£ 2,698,496	£ 6,072,564
Corn, Grain and Flour	20,164,811	39,432,624	63,536,322
Dead Meat, Bacon, Cheese )	4,343,592	13,277,683	30,144,973
Provisions )			

Liverpool and Glasgow have been greatly enriched by it, but notwithstanding her unequalled geographical position Bristol has been shut out from her fair share, mainly on account of the want of suitable Dock Accommodation for Ocean Steamers, an essential element in the trade . . .

The floating harbour at Bristol did not give the Port the benefit of her sea entrance and roadstead with their tidal advantages. It had to be approached by the narrow and winding course of the Avon navigable only on certain tides and involving consequent risks and detentions. Dock Accommodation, free from risks and detentions was an essential requirement for Ocean Steamers. With all her facilities for doing so Bristol failed to meet this requirement.

[p ii-iii reviews the history by which the Council committed itself exclusively to "Home Improvements" while a private Company built Avonmouth Docks] This immense outlay [£500,000] upon Home Improvements has left the Dock accommodation, practically the same as it was; the bed of the river has not been touched; the sharpest bend in it the Horseshoe remains unaltered; . . . the draught of water on the old sills at Cumberland gates is still the available limit for ships entering or leaving, the new sills being of no service; the risk attending navigation has been increased by the competition with Avonmouth . . . a steamer drawing 18ft. is excluded from the Bristol Docks for 126 tides of the year, one of 19ft. draught for 182 tides and one of 20ft. draught for 226 tides. Vessels of these draughts could enter Avonmouth every tide of the year. The largest portion of the American trade of the present day is carried on by steamers of from 20 to 25 feet draught.

The bends of the river are still too sharp to admit a steamer of a greater length than 300ft. coming up to the Docks even on the most favourable tides. The constant enlargement and lengthening of Ocean Steamers has rendered Bristol . . . more and more inaccessible to the trade of the day.

An important fact which ought to be kept in view is the progress of the Tunnel under the Severn. The Great Western Company intend, and in fact have prepared, plans for connecting this Tunnel with Avonmouth Dock. It cannot be doubted that direct communication with the coal fields of South Wales will immensely enhance the value of the Avonmouth Dock. Steamers will be able to coal at the Dock Quays with all modern appliances for despatch.

The Dock itself has an area of sixteen acres and is capable of berthing eight of the largest Ocean Steamers. It is not dependent on any scheme of dredging or scouring, the constant passage of the river at low water being found sufficient for the maintenance of a deep water channel. It is evident that in engineering dimensions and appliances that the Avonmouth Docks provide the accommodation that is required to enable Ocean Steamers of the first class to trade regularly to the Bristol Channel; and as a piece of engineering construction, its stability and success have now been thoroughly tested.

The American trade [at Avonmouth] is rapidly increasing

Small vessels as well as large find an advantage in discharging [at Avonmouth]. This is an ugly fact, because of its probable ultimate effect on the value of the Bristol Dock Estate.

Rough Statement of Quantities of Goods Imported into Avonmouth Docks.

24 Aug 77   24 Feb 78   24 Aug 78   24 Feb 79

Bacon, Hams, Beef Pork, Butter,					
Cheese and Canned Goods	cwt	165,791	23,622	186,383	181,648
Grain	cwt	33,723	162,997	169,978	229,246
Wheat	cwt	45,484	146,424	114,743	309,408
Total	cwt	244,998	333,943	471,104	720,302
Flour	barrels	428	20,819	7,575	31,032
Flour	sacks	—	—	320	1,086
Oilcake	bags	2,336	14,339	2,984	15,847
Deals, Ends and Batters	pieces	75,800	183,965	20,649	111,534
Lives Stock Cattle	number	—	—	2,104	890
Sheep	number	—	—	1,444	3,450
Pigs	number	—	—	237	22

As compared with the Bristol the Avonmouth Dock has lessened the cost in freight and charges to the importer of grain or provisions from America [by] the saving of the extra charges, towing up and down and working charges which fall on a ship coming to Bristol; [the saving of insurance against] the risk of coming up and going down the Avon; the avoidance of all risk of detention in waiting for Tides and the certainty of more rapid despatch in a Dock where the ship discharges alongside warehouses privileged under Act of Parliament (i.e. in which the goods are treated as if still on board the vessel) than is obtainable on an open public quay . . . and where as in the case of Bristol Docks there is no security for the safe custody of the goods, when landed, even in the Dock Sheds.

We may fairly conclude that the Bristol traders will in due time find out by practice, that the net cost in freight and charges of bringing produce from New York, and of distributing it from Avonmouth is reduced by about 3s/7d per Ton as compared with what can be done in Bristol.

The power to extend trade at Avonmouth indefinitely may place the ratepayers of Bristol in a position of much difficulty. The

obligations of the City in respect to its Docks amount to £864,681. On this the annual interest amounts to £35,500 and the ordinary necessary expenditure for maintenance of works, salaries etc to £20,700, totalling £56,200. This sum allows nothing [for] improvements and is therefore the minimum sum for which the City must annually provide. The receipts from Dock Dues for the year ending 30 April 1878 amounted to £47,347. To which must be added Wharfage £4,382, Town dues £9,946 and Mayor's dues £1,574 making a total of £63,249. Should the continued competition of Avonmouth withdraw say 30% of the present Bristol trade, the loss to the City would be about £19,000 per annum or considerably more than the 4d rate on the ancient City and added Districts which amounts to £13,000.

Total Expenditure on "Home Improvements" to 31 Jan. 1879 [from 1864?] £483,398 [of which] £340,000 raised on loans, Expenditure out of Revenue £143,398 and the total money spent on the Bristol Docks from Jan. 1848 to Jan 31 1879 amounts to £1,141,900. That a great part of this expenditure has been unremunerative and is likely to remain so there is no doubt. The best thing now to be done by the City will be to obtain the control of the Avonmouth Dock as early a date as possible. No concession which it would be possible to make in the Bristol Dues would prevent Avonmouth from drawing away the trade. Ocean Steamers pay for Dock Accommodation handsomely. It may reasonably be expected that three such vessels [of 2000 tons] would enter the Dock weekly producing an annual revenue of £36,348 from only three steamers.

<sup>1</sup> For the early history of electricity in Bristol see P.G. Lamb, *Electricity in Bristol 1863-1948* (Bristol, 1981) pp 1-2.

<sup>2</sup> These two ships inaugurated the Bristol City Line for which see J.C.G. Hill, *Shipspace and Bristol Fashion* (Liverpool n.d.) Chap. 4.

### **31 March 1879**

With reference to the experiments made by Mr. Brain of the Pyramid Electric Comy. at his own expense with the Electric Light during the last week at Bathurst Wharf and Prince Street Bridge Ordered that the best thanks of this Committee be forwarded to that gentleman, and that he be asked to furnish the Committee with exact particulars of the relative cost of the Light then given as compared with a similar amount of illumination by Gas and also with the ordinary amount afforded by Gas at these spots.

Mr. Wm. Smith moved that the Corporation be requested to appoint either their own Officer or some other Engineer of eminence to report upon the present state and value of the Avonmouth and Portishead Docks and their respective capacities for accommodating Ocean Steamers of the largest size.

Whereupon Mr. Hare moved as an amendment That the time is not opportune for obtaining an Engineer's opinion on either Dock. [Carried by a majority]

(Calendared)

The Chairman submitted reports by the Engineer, Haven Master and Secretary on the questions raised by Mr. Smith. Each member of the Committee was to have a copy of these reports and discussion was deferred until Mr. Smith produced his reply. The reports, as well as Mr Smith's statement on Portishead Docks, were to be considered private and not to be communicated to the press. Alderman Baker, as a Corporation Director of Portishead, gave notice that he would reply to Mr Smith.

**Remarks on Mr W. Smith's statement on the purchase by the city of Avonmouth Dock by the Secretary, Traffic Manager, Engineer and Haven Master, introduced and concluded by the Chairman'**

The Chairman stated that Mr Smith's proposal might have been summarily dismissed as the Avonmouth Co. appeared to think the time not ripe for discussing the question but for Mr Smith printing his statement. In consequence the press took it up to the undue glorification of Avonmouth and the depreciation of Bristol. The Chairman called for reports to expose inaccuracies in Mr Smith's case.

*The Secretary's report* disputed Mr Smith's claim that the 'Home Improvements' had not improved dock accommodation for the ocean steam trade by citing the increase in gross port receipts, the increase in the draught and length of vessels now coming up the river and the increase in tonnage using the port. In particular he cited the tonnage entering with grain and farm produce from the Black Sea, the U.S.A. and Canada. In 1877 this was 187,535 tons to the City Docks and 24,827 tons to Avonmouth and in 1878 227,499 tons to the City Docks and 54,749 tons to Avonmouth.

Out of 120 vessels entering Avonmouth to date 95 could have come up to Bristol on the same tide without difficulty. He estimated the extra charges to ships at Bristol compared with Avonmouth at 2s 9d per ton rather than Mr Smith's 3s 7d per ton. This extra charge only applied to grain brought in the largest ocean steamers and when the grain was for distribution outside Bristol.

The financial inducements offered to use Avonmouth has scarcely benefitted their 'profit and loss' account. Up to 31 December 1878 a profit of £4,203 11s 6d has been carried from 'revenue' to the 'profit and loss', only enough to meet one-fifth of the Company's fixed annual charges. Even if Mr Smith's expectations of five times the present traffic entering Avonmouth were realised the earnings would not meet the Company's fixed charges and would allow a dividend of only 3½%. If the Corporation could buy at say £300,000 it would be a speculation even if the Dock had five times its present traffic as further spending on sheds etc. would be needed to earn the assumed revenue.

There is a risk of Avonmouth being bought by a new Company, possibly the Midland Railway Co. who have no access to the city's



Harbour Wharf. By reducing dues at Avonmouth this Company might seriously damage the City Docks.

Providing better trading facilities and concessions on port charges may not bring the largest steamers to the City Docks but will keep the smaller ones. Mr Smith is right in saying Avonmouth is best for the largest steamers and until Bristol can provide for them she will not be able to grow to the size of Liverpool, Glasgow or Hull. If the Corporation owned both docks the dues could be so arranged that one dock should not prejudice the other. Buying at any sum over £200,000 would not be profitable until Avonmouth's trade is five or six times as great as now or until it has taken a much larger percentage of the City Dock's trade. The Corporation should consider the effect of the opening of Portishead Dock on Avonmouth and the relative advantages of the two concerns. It may then think it an inopportune time to buy Avonmouth.

*The Traffic Manager's report* substantiated the Secretary's on the working charges on wheat at Avonmouth and Bristol. *The Engineer's report* declared Mr Smith's figures on working drafts at the three docks to be inaccurate, deplored exaggerations of the cost of works done in the river — the cost was £64,431 since 1865 not 'millions' and maintained that Mr Smith had exaggerated Avonmouth's capacity to berth and admit large steamers. *The Haven Master's report* listed the larger ships that had used Bristol in the last three years. The largest sailing ship was the *Chancellor*, 1970 registered tons and the largest steamer, excluding the Great Western Steamship line, was the *Hector* 1534 registered tons.

The Chairman said the reports demonstrated 'that the old Port of Bristol has been greatly ill treated in the remarks of one of its citizens'. He maintained that buying Avonmouth, even if it should be made profitable, would damage Bristol ratepayers by the transfer of labour and capital from Bristol to Avonmouth. Merchants and shipowners benefitted from the competition of the two docks. It would be less of a sacrifice for Bristol ratepayers to have to pay a little more to improve the City Docks and reduce port charges than the much greater burden which the purchase of Avonmouth would impose on them. After a few years fighting the two interests would settle down with traffic enough for both.

#### **Mr Smith's Statement on Portishead Docks.'**

Assuming that the Portishead Docks were an accomplished fact, and that the Corporation had absolute control of them, it would not . . . weaken the arguments in favour of the purchase of Avonmouth Docks.

1. The site of the Portishead Dock does not appear to have advantages at all comparable with the mouth of the Avon . . .
2. The approach to Portishead is circuitous and in dangerous proximity to the Firefly and Flatness Rocks and the Newcome Shoals.

3. The facilities as regards draught of water and the margin of time available for vessels entering and leaving Portishead are much inferior to those at Avonmouth
4. It would be necessary at Portishead for small craft and barges to navigate two miles of open channel before entering the Avon and the interruptions and risks arising from tides and winds to which this would expose them would be felt as a serious drawback. In the case of Avonmouth, goods are lightered up the river to Bristol with perfect safety at all times and in all weathers.
5. The advantage which Avonmouth possesses by connexion with the Midland Railway has been pointed out: The Midland Railway has no running powers over the Portishead Railway.
6. The advantage of direct railway communication with South Wales . . . which Avonmouth will possess on completion of the Severn Tunnel will not be obtained at Portishead.
7. The capacity, quay space and berthing accommodation for ocean steamers at Portishead are very limited compared with Avonmouth.

Even if the Corporation completed the purchase of the Portishead Dock . . . it would remain the fact that a more efficient instrument would still be left in the hands of a private company.

The dockising of the river Avon . . . great as are the attractions of this proposal . . . cannot be regarded at present as a practical or even a feasible one.

1. It is almost certain that the Board of Trade would oppose such an extensive interference with the course of a navigable tidal river.
2. The weight of engineering testimony is against it.
3. The scheme necessitates the disposal of the sewage of Bristol by other outlets than the existing ones . . . a work of unknown magnitude and cost and its ultimate solution belongs probably to a very distant future.
4. The existence of two docks at the mouth of the river would greatly complicate the question. These docks would have to be purchased, or a long long expensive, and probably unsuccessful Parliamentary contest would be fought.

<sup>1</sup> This was a 24 page printed statement.

**5 May 1879**

**Reply of Mr. William Smith to 'Remarks' by the Secretary, Engineer and Haven Master [Calendared]**

The reports are largely irrelevant to the question at issue; the exceptions to my figures relate to minor points and the statistics confirm rather than refute my conclusions.

The expenditure of £483,398 on 'Home Improvements' would have sufficed to build an Ocean Steam Dock enabling Bristol to compete on fair terms for Ocean Steamers and rendering most of the 'Home Improvements' unnecessary.

Importers will still wish to use Avonmouth in preference to Bristol

to secure the 2s 9d profit per ton referred to by the Secretary who admits that the City Docks cannot compete with Avonmouth for even the smaller vessels without a formidable programme for further improvements. What is their cost? Will not this greatly exceed the amount needed to buy Avonmouth? Purchase will make such improvements unnecessary, prevent wasteful competition, avoid the risk of Avonmouth falling into hostile hands and allow dues to be arranged to the benefit of both Docks.

£200,000 is not a fair price for a Dock of 16 acres and extensive shed and warehouse accommodation. It is surely prudent and more economical to buy now and not wait until the danger of take-over of Avonmouth is imminent, or its trade expands or it poses a greater threat to Bristol.

Mr Smith repeated his view that the new sills at Cumberland gates had not increased the depth for ships using the Floating Harbour. An increase in the tonnage using it was no proof that this was caused by the 'Home Improvements' More can be said for the new Junction Lock than any of the other improvements. Many agree with me that the alterations in the river have increased not decreased the risk of accidents.

Mr Smith defended his estimate of the berthing capacity of Avonmouth as 8 steamers. The great majority of the 453 steamers on the register of more than 275ft in length cannot be accommodated at Bristol but all but four (not reckoning the *Great Eastern*) can be accommodated at Avonmouth on all tides. It is one of the most efficient Docks in the country for the ocean steam trade: Bristol is one of the most inefficient. Competition between the two will inevitably increase to the serious detriment of Bristol Docks and the Bristol ratepayer.

The Haven Master ascribes his list of accidents to human error but this operates much more readily in the Avon with its sharp bends, narrow channel, quick tides and strong currents.

The right solution is to have both docks under one control. He agreed with Mr Wills that 'we must not repose . . . in fancied security. To avoid a risk we must pay for insurance'.

Mr Smith moved: That it is desirable in the interests of Ratepayers . . . that the City should purchase the Avonmouth Dock provided it can do so on equitable terms.

The Chairman moved an amendment deferring consideration for a fortnight — carried.

## **12 May 1879    Report of the Council's Finance Committee to Council**

Your Committee find that during the last few years a great change has taken place in the use of the City cranes, as is apparent from the fact that though in 1875 83,533 tons of goods were raised by them, in the year just closed only 21,739 tons were so raised. Your Committee are of opinion that this is mainly attributable to the difference in the system on which trade upon the Quays is now carried on. Much of the

work formerly done by the cranes on the Quays is now done by the steam cranes which most steamers carry on their own decks, and much of the merchandise for which cranes were formerly required is now imported in more portable shape.

The earnings of the cranes have of late years steadily decreased without any reduction in the expense of the establishment. Your Committee recommend that the management of the City Cranes be for the future intrusted to the Docks Committee.

### 19 May 1879

Discussion on Mr Wm Smith's motion was resumed.

#### **Further remarks by the Secretary and Engineer on the Reply of Mr Wm. Smith (Calendared)**

The Secretary in reply to an observation of Mr Smith in his Reply that revenue had increased more rapidly before than after the Cumberland Basin Lock was completed in 1873, thus casting doubt on the value of the 'Home Improvements', gave four reasons for this. First trade had fallen off generally over the U.K. since 1874 and in S. Wales since 1876; secondly Finzel's sugar refinery had closed in 1877; thirdly in 1877-8 the Black Sea ports had been blockaded; and fourthly since May 1877 there had been competition from Avonmouth. The new works had not had a fair chance of showing their full value. Figures showed that there was a marked increase in the larger steamers and sailing vessels coming up to Bristol since the opening of the new Junction Lock in 1871. Great benefit has already resulted: the present class of Irish coasting steamers and the *Great Western* line of Atlantic steamers could not have run without the improvements.

The saving of 2s 9d per ton applies only to grain in the largest class of ocean steamers. The concession on dues made at Avonmouth explains why 95/120 vessels which could have come up to Bristol did not do so.

He was not suggesting that £300,000 was what the Avonmouth Dock was worth or that £200,000 was an equitable price. A fair price would require the opinion of an engineer on the works and an estimate of the indirect and direct advantage accruing to the Corporation from a purchase.

The Engineer maintained that the new works were not useless but saved vessels hours on arrival and departure, had improved river navigation and enabled longer ships to use the Floating Harbour. He disputed Mr Smith's view that Avonmouth could take the very large ocean going steamers on nearly all tides of the year or 'a class of vessels which are now running and are stated to be on the increase'. He agreed that Avonmouth could take much larger vessels than Bristol.

Mr George Wills moved as an amendment: That this Committee having made careful inquiry into the subject and believing the use of the Old Docks by shipping to be alone conducive to the general

interests of the Ratepayers of Bristol decline further to entertain the proposition for the purchase of Avonmouth Dock.

It was lost by a majority of 12 to 4 viz. for the amendment Messrs. Geo. Wills, C.B. Hare F. Terrell and J.C. Wall Against Alderman Jones, Lucas, Fox; Messrs. Low, Dunlop, Bush, Smith, Pethick, Miles, Townsend and Powell.

Mr. W. Pethick then moved as a further amendment That this Committee believing it to be doubtful that the purchase of the Avonmouth Dock would be beneficial to the Ratepayers of Bristol, and that it would not be for the interest of the Bristol Docks Estate to acquire the control of the competing Dock, except upon such terms as they have no reason to believe would be accepted by the Avonmouth Company, considers that with the expected opening of the Docks at Portishead the present is not an opportune moment for initiating proposals to purchase Avonmouth Dock.

The amendment was lost by a majority of 10 to 7 viz for the amendment Aldmn. Baker, Fox, Wall, Messrs. Geo Wills, C.B. Hare, Pethick and Terrell. Against Aldmn. Jones, Lucas, Messrs Law, Derham, Dunlop, Bush, Smith, Miles, Townsend and Powell.

The question was then put on the original motion which was carried by a majority of 11 to 6, viz for the original motion Aldm. Jones, Lucas, Fox, Messrs. Low, Derham, Dunlop, Bush, Smith, Miles, Townsend and Powell. Against Aldmn Baker, Wall, Messrs. Geo Wills, C.B. Hare, Pethick and Terrell.

## **26 May 1879**

Alderman Baker called the attention of the Committee to the insertion in the *Bristol Daily Post* on the 20th inst of the statement submitted on the 31st March re Portishead Docks which it was decided at last meeting should not be made public.

Mr. Smith said that it had been inserted totally against his wish and instructions. Resolved that the Secretary furnish the Press with his notes of Alderman Baker's reply thereto.

Ordered that the Secretary have 200 copies of the following documents printed in pamphlet form to accompany the Report. Mr. Smith's statement dated 17 March. The Chairman's remarks dated 7 April, The Secretary, Traffic Manager, Engineer's and Haven Master's Remarks; Mr. Smith's reply and further Remarks by the Secretary and Engineer.

Resolved that the Harbour Master be directed that no passenger steam vessel be worked between Totterdown and Hanham at a greater speed than 2 miles an hour [to avoid injurious effects to the banks].

## **9 June 1879**

The Lords of the Council have been pleased to approve of the Wharf constructed on the Harbour Railway Wharf, Bristol as a place of landing for Foreign Animals under the provisions of Part IV of the

## Foreign Animals Order.

**16 June 1879**

The Finance Committee called the attention of the Committee to the Bank Book showing a Debit balance of £5,830 16s 9d. They also reported they saw no signs of any improvement in the Revenue. Whereupon the Engineer was ordered to defer for a while the building of the larger of the 2 sheds at Cumberland Basin. Resolved also That the Engineer and other officers be informed of the urgent necessity for limiting Expenditure.

**23 June 1879**

The Finance Committee submitted a statement of the Dock A/cs for year ended 30 April with an estimate of the Ordinary Revenue and Expenditure for the year ending April 1880 showing a probable Credit Balance which will enable payment to be made for the new Works already contracted and sanctioned by the Committee estimated at £5130 without overdrawing A/c at the Bankers.

Resolved that no further new Works be taken in hand until the Revenue has considerably increased. The Dockmaster was ordered to confer with the Engineer as to the expediency of reducing at once the number of men employed permanently at the various locks.

**30 June 1879**

The Town Clerk reported that the summons for recovery from the Waterford Steamship Coy. of the balance of expenses of removing the wreck of the *Gipsy* had been dismissed but without costs. Resolved that no further proceedings be taken.

**7 July 1879**

The Town Clerk reported that the Report of the Committee [recommending] the purchasing of Avonmouth Dock was presented to the Council at their meeting on 24 June and consideration of it was adjourned until their meeting on 1st inst when it was Resolved That further consideration be postponed until a communication has been received from the Bristol Port and Channel Dock Coy. that they are willing and desirous to discuss the question.

**14 July 1879**

Read a petition signed by many leading butchers and cattle dealers of Bristol asking the Committee to provide at once a second wharf [for Foreign Animals] Resolved that this is most essential.

Read a letter dating the 28 *ult.* from the General Manager G.W. Ry Co. agreeing to the principle of a conjunction of Tramways to be constructed on the Quays with the Company's lines on the Harbour Railway.

**11 August 1879**

The Lords of the Council approve of the site proposed [for a second wharf for Foreign Animals]. The Town Clerk had written to the Society of Merchant Venturers accepting their offer of a lease for 14 years of the ground near the Merchants Dock at a rent of £216 per annum.

The Chairman having regard to the great importance of not losing an hour in getting the wharf ready had, after carefully considering plans and rough estimate of £3,100 for a wharf capable of accommodating 200 cattle and 1000 sheep and Pigs with 4 slaughter houses etc submitted by the Assistant Engineer, and also tenders of prices, directed Messrs. Brock & Bruce's tender for the slaughter houses and Fountain and Boyd's for the rest of the work be accepted and the work put in hand forthwith and pushed on as much as possible.

**15 September 1879**

Read a report from the Secretary as to provisional arrangements he had made for allowing some rebate on the Dues in respect of certain cargoes of grain and also in respect of the first trip of each vessel of the new line of Steamers from America started by Messrs Charles Hill and Sons. Arrangements approved.

**22 September 1879**

Resolved by a majority that the Secretary report to the Board what legal authority there is for this Board allowing some rebate on the Dues in respect of certain cargoes of grain etc [see 15 September].

**27 October 1879**

The Secretary reported that he is not aware that there is any legal authority for this Board allowing some rebate.

**11 November 1879**

Read a report from the Secretary recommending in consequence of the increased urgent requirements of the Grain Traffic that immediate steps be taken to lay down rails at Bathurst wharf close in front of the sheds and that these lines be connected with those already laid down in front of Princes Wharf. The Engineer submitted a rough estimate of its cost, £400. Resolved that the Engineer put [the plan] in hand at once.

The Secretary then read notes of the proceedings of the meeting of some of the leading ware-house owners, hauliers and other firms interested in the trade of the Port held at this office on the 4th inst. on the subject of Tramways on the City Quays. The Engineer submitted plans of the proposed Tramways. Read also a letter from the Secretary to the Bristol Tramway Coy containing proposals as to the

terms on which they would be willing to assist the Corporation in obtaining a 'Provisional Order' for the proposal.

The Engineer's plans provisionally approved; the Tramway Company requested [to assist in] obtaining a Provisional Order for a system.

### **17 November 1879**

The Traffic Manager gave it as his opinion that the proposed scheme of Tramways would not cheapen the cost of conveying grain from ships lying at the City Quays to the railway system but would cause serious inconvenience and obstruction to the ordinary general traffic.

Second shed at Cumberland Basin approved and sanctioned.

### **12 January 1880**

#### **Report of the Docks Committee to Council (Calendared)**

##### **Bristol Tramways Extension**

The Committee have long thought that Tramways connecting the deep water berths on the Bristol side of the Harbour with the Harbour Railway would greatly benefit Bristol's commercial interests. Hence they welcomed a proposal by Bristol Tramway Co. to obtain a Provisional Order<sup>1</sup> in the coming parliamentary session to effect this. The Company's draft Order, however, envisages a much more extensive plan. This might impede street traffic and risks control of the Quays passing out of the Corporation's hands. The Committee recommends Council to refuse assent to the proposed Order. The Engineer has been asked to consider the feasibility of an experimental line of Tramway on a part of the Quays.

##### **Bristol and Portishead Pier and Railway, Portishead Dock (bill)<sup>2</sup>**

The Council has to decide whether or not to oppose this bill. It gives the Co. power to raise £60,000 preference capital and £20,000 on mortgage both having priority over the present share capital of which the Corporation hold £100,000 ordinary stock. If the Corporation oppose the Dock will be left without the facilities for discharging large vessels and thus unable to produce an income from the Corporation's investment. If the Corporation allows the Co. to raise more money to complete the works the creation of substantial preference stock will reduce the prospect for a dividend for the Corporation as a holder of ordinary stock.

##### **Bristol Port and Channel Dock Bill<sup>3</sup>**

The Co. seek power to make a lock from their existing Avonmouth Dock into Broad Pill; to take additional Corporation lands; to raise more capital; and to transfer the Pilotage Authority regarding Avonmouth Dock from the Corporation to the Co.

The Engineer reports that the proposed lock is for the use of barges



and is sufficiently set back from the river as not to inconvenience vessels entering the Avon. The Council is advised to insist on clauses preventing the Co. materially altering the dock entrance or having jurisdiction across the river or scouring the bed and shore of Broad Pill. Of special interest in view of the keen competition between Avonmouth and Bristol is the unlimited power to fix tolls as it sees fit given to the Co. in clause 20. Anything which gives undue advantage to the Co. will be against Bristol's interests. The Committee believe Bristol is unfairly treated: it improved the river for the use of larger vessels and Avonmouth benefits but does not pay the Corporation a share of its dues. The Committee have not yet seen a way to contest this. Bargaining through the new lock will intensify the evil.

The Pilotage Authority should not be transferred to a private body. Pilotage requires revision and improvement but it would be best if this was taken up by the Board of Trade. Prevalent opinion is that pilotage from Lundy to Kingroad should be optional but imperative in Kingroad and the Avon. It would be highly undesirable for Avonmouth, Portishead and Bristol each to be pilotage authorities employing three bodies of pilots obeying different rules and charging different fees. The Corporation as Conservators would be liable for removing wrecks resulting from deficiencies by Avonmouth and Portishead pilots.

The Council is advised not to enter into a parliamentary contest simply to preserve its Pilotage power but to express a willingness to surrender it either to the Board of Trade or a body under it representing each port according to its importance. This suggestion is offered to convince the public that the Committee is not influenced by private or local views in objecting to this part of the bill which it recommends the Council to oppose.

<sup>1</sup> The Board of Trade could make such orders under the Tramways Act, 1870.

<sup>2</sup> This became 43 and 44 Vict. cap. xxii An Act to extend the time for the purchase of lands, authorized by the Bristol and Portishead Pier and Railway Company's Act, 1877, to be acquired, and to authorize that Company to raise additional capital.

<sup>3</sup> This became 43 and 44 Vict. cap. xlix An Act to authorize the Bristol Port and Channel Dock Company to make a new entrance into their Dock and to confer further powers on them.

## **26 January 1880 (Calendared)**

Messrs Charles Hill had been allowed £30 for the towage of each of their vessels of the City Line for their first three voyages. Messrs Hill asked for the concession to be continued. Refused by a majority. The Committee to be specially summoned to again consider the serious falling off in the Port Dues.

## **4 February 1880**

### **Special meeting**

On the motion of Mr W. Proctor Baker, resolved that a sub-committee be appointed to report upon the comparative Dues and cost of importing into Bristol and into Avonmouth and on what

reduction of Dues or other measures would be necessary to attract vessels of the capacity of those engaged in the grain and Provision trade to Bristol in preference to Avonmouth.

Alderman Baker was requested to invite some of the leading importers of grain to attend the meeting of the sub-committee.

### **6 February 1880**

Read a Report from the Engineer on the question of Tramways on the City Quays [a pencilled note in the margin reads 'This report is the climax to the absurd agitation for trams on the city quays.']

The total length of the proposed Lines of Rails on the Quays will be about one mile and a quarter. A heavy chilled block rail would be the best. I estimate the entire cost at £7,800 of which about one half would be for the granite pitching required between the rails. So far as my investigations have gone, there will not be found any saving in the railway system over the ordinary road wagon hauling . . . I think it will be found that with the sharp curves, sidling ground and other drawbacks attending the rails, the balance is in favour of ordinary wagon hauling over a well paved road.

### **9 February 1880**

**Report of the Docks Committee to Council** [on Tramways on which the Committee was bound to report by 10 February by the terms of a Council motion requiring this].

Having received a further Report thereon from their Engineer it was moved by Alderman Baker that this Committee recommend the Council not to proceed with the matter in the present session. C.B. Hare moved as an amendment that the Tramways Company having stated that there are no insuperable engineering difficulties and the Town Clerk having stated that the legal difficulties may be overcome the Committee recommend the Council to assent to the promotion of the order.

The amendment was lost and the original motion carried.

Read a letter from the leading sugar refiners asking for a reduction of the present dues on Sugar.

### **16 February 1880**

Alderman Edwards reported that as the result of a private conversation on the subject of the existing competition between the two Docks with Mr. Charles Nash, Chairman of the Bristol Port and Channel Dock Coy. he had received a letter from that gentleman stating that 3 members of his Board would be willing to meet and discuss the subject with 3 members of this Committee at his office on Saturday next at 11 a.m.

Whereupon it was moved by Alderman Edwards and seconded by Mr Gardner 'That having reported that the Port and Channel Dock Coy are willing to meet this Committee on the subject of the relative

charges at the two Docks it is expedient that three members of this Committee be appointed for the purpose of having an unofficial meeting with the said gentlemen, reporting the result in due course.

Mr. Geo. Wills<sup>1</sup> declined to put this motion to the Committee and having vacated the chair, Mr. C.B. Hare Vice Chairman took the chair.

Mr. C.B. Hare then moved as an amendment 'That Mr. Edwards and Mr. Fox be requested to meet unofficially the Directors of Avonmouth Dock Coy. to ascertain whether there is any prospect of mutual arrangements being come to between the Boards to maintain their respective tariff.

But the amendment not being seconded the question was put on the original motion and the same was passed by a majority Resolved that Messrs. Edwards, Smith and Law be the three members appointed to carry out the said resolution.

[Report of the sub-committee on the comparative dues and cost of importing grain into Bristol and Avonmouth]

At Avonmouth the Dues are	1s	0½d	per 100 Bushels
and working and putting into Ry			
Truck	2s	2d	per 100 Bushels
Making a gross total of	3s	6½d	per 100 Bushel
but subject to an allowance in the			
competitive trade of	1s	6½d	per 100 Bushels
making the net charge	2s	0d	
	= to	1s	9d
Whilst at Bristol the Dues are	1s	6¼d	per quarter
and the cost of working and putting			per 100 Bushels
into Ry Truck	1s	9d	per 100 Bushels
		<hr/>	
		3s	3¼d
	=	3s	14d
			per quarter

Therefore taking this and the merchants statement as to the collateral advantages at Bristol into consideration, it appears that so long as the charge for labor at Avonmouth remains at the present tariff, a rate of ½d per quarter more than the net rate charged on Grain at Avonmouth from time to time is the highest due which can be imposed at Bristol with the expectation that the grain trade will be brought to Bristol, and that as the Avonmouth Company is now making an allowance of 1½d per quarter on grain discharged direct to Railway Trucks (or Barges) it will be necessary to allow 1d per quarter at Bristol in order to put the Bristol Docks in an equally favourable position with the Avonmouth Docks.

<sup>1</sup> George Wills, a wine merchant, had opposed any capital contribution by the Corporation to either of the rivermouth docks. He had been Chairman for only two years and four months hence his influence on policy was probably slight (W. G. Neale, *op cit* pp 204-5).

**8 March 1880**

Mr. George Wills informed the Committee with reference to his action on the 16th ult. that he did not wish to resume his position as Chairman.

The Town Clerk reported that as regards the Channel Dock Bill, that a petition had been presented against it, that since then he had had constant interviews with the Solicitors to the Company and it had been arranged to strike out all the Pilotage Clauses, to modify the question of Tolls and that the Engineers on both sides had made a satisfactory arrangement as to the exact line and position of the new lock near Broad Pill and also that satisfactory clauses had been agreed to ensuring the retention of the Haven Master's authority over the said Pill and surrounding waters . . . [so the petition was withdrawn].

Aldmn. Edwards reported that he and the other two gentlemen had had an interview on 26 ult. at the Merchants Hall with Messrs. C. Nash, M. Whitwell and H. Dalrymple three of the Directors of the Port and Channel Dock Coy and that he had since received a letter from the Chairman of that Company enclosing an extract from the Minutes of its Board meeting of 4 March 1880.

[The extract expressed the Company's willingness to enter into an agreement with the Corporation that neither should make any allowances to sailing vessels not exceeding 1200 Tons (register) and steamships not exceeding 800 tons (register) laden with Grain, Oil Bake and Provisions. The agreement to lapse if the Portishead Coy make any allowance]

After considerable discussion, resolved unanimously That this Committee fully appreciate the amicable feeling evinced by the Port and Channel Dock Coy. This Committee while they approve the principle that has been arrived at desire that it should be extended to goods of every description and also to vessels exceeding the Tonnages of 800 and 1200 respectively and that Messrs Edwards, Smith and Law be requested to continue their valuable assistance and to confer [further] with the Directors of the Port and Channel Dock Coy.

**15 March 1880**

On the motion of Mr. Hare, seconded by Aldmn. Edwards it was resolved unanimously that Mr. W. Proctor Baker be elected Chairman.

**22 March 1880**

The Secretary reported the particulars of a conversation which he had with Mr. Charles Hill on the 18th inst. on the subject of making allowances for towage to vessels of his City line, when Mr. Hill stated that if the Committee refuse to make such an allowance he should in future order his vessels into Avonmouth.

Ordered That Mr. Hill be informed that this Committee are unable

to deviate [from their previous decision]. With reference to this question Mr. George Wills gave notice that he should move at next meeting [that they should do so].

Read Extract from a resolution of the Directors of the Port and Channel Dock Coy. [agreeing to extend the proposed agreement to cargoes of whatever description but sticking to the distinction between sailing vessels of up to 1200 tons register and steam ships up to 800 Tons register and vessels of higher tonnages]. Another interview to be sought with the Company.

It was also moved by Mr. Law seconded by Mr. Hare That it be an instruction to Messrs Edwards, Smith and Law that while no limit of tonnage is desirable a limit of less than 1200 Tons register applied to Steamers as well as sailing vessels would not be entertained by this Committee, any arrangement to be subject to a revision or cancellation at 3 or 6 months notice on either side . . . carried by a majority.

Mr. R. Jenning Harbour Master, Bathurst Basin granted leave of absence for 6 months full pay after 52 years of service on the Dock Estate.

## **12 April 1880**

Resolved That the Town Clerk be instructed to take Counsel's opinion whether under the Bristol Port and Channel Dock Act 1864 the Corporation can claim from the Channel Dock Coy. some payment in respect of such barges using the docks and works of the Company [i.e. working between Avonmouth Dock and the City Docks].

Alderman Edwards submitted [a] memorandum [declaring] That the deputations from the Bristol Docks Committee and the Channel Docks Coy. are prepared to recommend their respective Boards not to make any allowance on Steamers or sailing vessels of any size nor on their cargoes of whatever description, which on leaving port of loading are not bound by charter or Bill of Lading to any place of discharge [terminable by either side on 3 months notice or immediately if the Portishead Dock Coy. make any allowance].

Moved by Alderman Edwards and seconded by Alderman Jones That the arrangement be approved. Mr. G. Wills moved and Alderman Wall seconded as an amendment [that Bristol retaliate by reducing its dues to counteract the rebates of the Channel Dock Coy.] Amendment lost. Alderman Parker moved and Alderman Wall moved a further amendment [that the Committee object to any allowance in respect of any Vessels of less than 1200 Tons register and that the deputation seek agreement with the Channel Dock Coy on this point]. Negatived by a majority. Original motion carried by a majority. Mr. G. Wills gave notice that he would move his amendment as a substantive motion in the Town Council.

## **10 May 1880**

Read a letter dated 4th inst. from the General Superintendent of the

Swansea Harbour Trust calling attention to the vast difference in the carrying capacity of Steam ships as compared with their registered tonnage and to the loss which Dock Owners thereby suffer and inviting the Committee to take part in a Conference on the 12th inst. at the Westminster Palace Hotel on this subject and also as to the propriety of making a representative thereon to the Board of Trade by deputation of Dock Owners. [Secretary to attend and report back].

## 24 May 1880

Secretary reported that he had been put on the Special Committee appointed to work up the subject [of measurement of vessels for tonnage dues and to suggest a remedy to the Board of Trade.

Read a letter from Bristol and Portishead Railway Coy. [which stated] it would not be justified in entering into the agreement [on rebates].

It may occur, that the accommodation provided for ocean steam traffic at Portishead will attract some vessels that would otherwise go to Bristol but considering the large share which the City has in the Portishead undertaking the payments on account of Tonnage made by Portishead to Bristol and the benefit to the revenues of the City by the increasing value of the Corporation Estates at Portishead which adjoin the Dock, my Directors are of opinion that the development of Trade, there, cannot fail to be, on the whole advantageous to the Rate payers of Bristol.

As regards competition between Portishead and Docks other than those in Bristol it must be remembered that in consequence of the facilities of the Portishead site, and of the fact that the funds for the construction of the works were provided in cash, the Dock has been completed at a comparatively small cost; my Directors are also satisfied that the expenses of working the Dock Traffic will be moderate.

For these reasons it will be in their power to adopt a low scale of charges [to the benefit of shipowners, merchants the shareholders and the Debenture holders].

(Signed J.F.R. Daniel, Secy.

Ordered that a copy of this letter be forwarded to the Channel Dock Coy.

## Annual Report of the Docks Committee to Council [printed]

Total Revenue from all sources	£59,428	1	8		
The Ordinary Expenditure has been					
For Maintenance, Dredging, Salaries					
etc.	£15,082	15	9	£51,409	17s. 6d.
For Rent Charge, Interest on Loans and					
Sinking Fund	£36,327	1	9		
Leaving a Balance of	£8,078	4	2		

The Expenditure on Works and Extraordinaries has been as follows

River and Harbour Improvement

(N.B. chiefly in cutting off Suspension Bridge point)

Laying down rails at Bathurst Wharf	£1,227	7	3
Prince Street Bridge (Balance)	£579	8	3
Sheds at Cumberland Basin on Account	£824	3	4
Expenses incurred in connection with the wreck of the S.S. <i>Gipsy</i> not chargeable to the Borough Fund	£1,443	8	8
Also Foreign Cattle Depot, Unscheduled Countries, On Account	£423	15	4
Ditto Scheduled Ditto	£2,255	13	10
Net loss on Working Ditto	£3,674	18	11
	£19	17	8
	£10,136	9	7
Less Credit, see Account no. 3	£364	8	11

The Total Expenditure has therefore exceeded the Receipts on the year by

£2,118 5 5

There has been again a heavy falling off in the Black Sea grain and American grain and provision trades and a small decrease in guano, fruit and hides. There is a considerable increase in the imports of naphtha, petroleum, timber, deals, resin, oils and sundries. The general result is a decrease of £17,684, registered tons of shipping, and of £153 5s 4d on dues . . . and a loss to the Borough Fund under the head of Town Dues and Wharfage Dues amounting to £1,875 7s 4d as compared with 1877 there is a decrease in the Revenue from Dock Dues of £8,172 7 10 and a decrease in the City Dues of £7,077 10 5 making a total decrease of Revenue of £15,189 18 3, more than one fifth [of that] of 1877. The decrease is divisible among the chief trades according to the following table.

It was clear that the decline was due to the cargoes entering Avonmouth rather than your Docks. Steamers now do the chief share of the carrying business in these trades. But many of these steamers being of such a size as can properly enter your Dock have been diverted to Avonmouth and Portishead although the importers have subsequently required much of their cargoes to be barged to Bristol where the goods are landed at the City Quays without contributing anything to the Dock or City revenues. The system of concessions to the importers made at Avonmouth was the main reason why cargoes which might have come to Bristol were diverted.

[The Report details the agreement negotiated with the Channel Coy.] which your Committee think would practically have had the effect of inducing merchants to bring a large proportion of Black Sea and American grain cargoes to Bristol [where] the merchant has his cargoes immediately under his own observation and better facilities for distribution.

Nature of Trade	In Register Tonnage of Vessels		In Weight of Imported Goods		In Dock and City Dues	
	Increase	Decrease	Increase	Decrease	Increase	Decrease
1. Sugar		16,211		16,745		3,592
2. Timber		27,660		26,060 loads		
				6,480 12 Os		4,431
3. Wine	1,518			761 pipes		
				2,659 dozen		405
4. Grain from U.S.A.		17,653				1,750
5. Grain from all other countries		49,421		466,055 grs		
				or		
				103,560 loan	7,716	4,935
6. Oilcake, Flour and provisions from U.S.A.		10,846		Oilcake 8,076 tons		
				Flour 2,432 tons		1,031
				Provisions 2,217 tons		
7. Sundries	3,915					469
8. Petroleum & Naptha	10,726		3,641		1,424	
	16,159	121,791				1,424
Net decrease		105,632				£15,189



It cannot be too clearly stated that it is not the risk of the river navigation, nor want of quay and shed accommodation which have so far prevented so many vessels from coming to Bristol but simply the more favourable terms [on offer at Avonmouth and Portishead]. There have been but few instances during the last year when any ships actually bound for Bristol would have been prevented by their length or draught from coming up the river without delay.

[The Portishead Coy. decline to accept the agreement and the Channel Dock Coy have therefore withdrawn from it]

Under these circumstances, and as the recent concessions made by the two Companies amount in some cases to double the dues levied on grain at Bristol, your Committee see little prospect of maintaining at Bristol even the present volume of traffic in this commodity. A similar system of bonus to importers may easily be worked so as to attract to the Avonmouth and Portishead Docks other branches of trade now resorting to your Docks. As the Avonmouth and Portishead Docks are now conceding to importers of grain, allowances greater than the whole of the city Dues, it would be necessary to put your Dock in a position to compete. In addition to remitting the whole of the dues a bonus would have to be given to importers. No probable increase of tonnage dues could compensate the City for such a sacrifice, and your Committee therefore recommend that you take no active measures in the direction of reduction of dues at present, as they conceive that the unreasonable and unprofitable competition between the Avonmouth and Portishead Companies can be of no long duration.

[Reports on completion of Cattle Wharfs and new Sheds and river improvement pointing out that if these had been treated as capital expenditure there would have been a considerable surplus of income over expenditure].

Mr. Geo Wills, seconded by Aldmn. Wall moved that a reduction by 5/6ths of the Town and Wharfage dues (equal to 1.22d per qr. of grain) should be made on all Grain, Flour, Oil Cake and Provisions imported into Bristol, the said reduction to continue as long as the new Dock Companies persist in their abatements from the printed rates; — also that an allowance be made of 4d per ton register on all ships of 800 tons register and upwards laden partly or wholly with grain or provisions and coming up the Avon to the old Port, this allowance being intended to mitigate the extra charge of towage borne by the ship. Amendment lost.

## **21 June 1880**

The Engineer submitted a report with plans of the best way of further dealing with the Points and other difficulties of the River.

Of the 3 schemes marked A. B. and C. which would give centre curves of 1700 and 1800 feet, 1600 feet, and 1400 feet respectively the Committee after discussion preferred Scheme B. The Engineer was instructed to report on Monday next as to the least time in which plan

B could be done . . . and to report as to the advantages compared with present state which [its] execution will afford.

### 28 June 1880

The Engineer reported that dividing the works [in scheme B] into three portions viz. 1. Completion of Suspension Bridge Point 2. Excavation of Round Point Rock Shoal 3. Completion of contract work above and excavation of rock below low water at Tea and Coffee House Point.

No. 1 could be done in 2 years; No 2 in 3 years and No 3 in from 5 to 6 years time and the extra cost if carried out in the least possible time [would be] No 1 about £400; No 2 about £1000 and No 3 £6000 to £7000 which would increase his estimate for the whole from £29,147 to £36,547 or £37,547.

### Report of the Docks Committee to Council

The competition to which your Committee referred [in their last report] has considerably increased. [Their] opinion is that the competition is unreasonable and unprofitable and they can see no prospect of its early termination. Notwithstanding the views expressed by them [in their last report] as to the present inexpediency of reducing the rates levied on grain and provisions, it may soon become necessary if this unfortunate competition continues for your Committee to propose a comprehensive measure to enable them to compete with these Docks. This must necessarily to be effective propose directly or indirectly a reduction of dues, for unless such concessions be made the bulk of the grain trade will be lost to the City Docks. It will be advisable to make this reduction as the lesser evil rather than incur the greater loss if the whole of the grain trade be diverted from their Docks. 17,151 tons of shipping carrying grain have been diverted from Bristol since the 1st/May last.

[Reminds Council that the Dock estate is part of the Corporate Estate and therefore the Borough Fund can be used to pay interest on borrowed moneys and for maintaining the Docks if Dock receipts are insufficient.]

### 9 August 1880

Read a memorial signed by 40 Pilots calling attention to the fact that Messrs. M. Whitwill and Son practically select 3 Pilots for the Pilotage of all their vessels of the Great Western Line and for this purpose use a set of private signals, which measures the petitioners believing to be illegal and very prejudicial to the interests of all the other pilots, ask the Committee's intervention.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This practice caused a minor civil war in Pill, the home of the Bristol pilots (see P. J. Stuckey, *The sailing pilots of the Bristol Channel* (Newton Abbot, 1977) chap. 10.).

**16 August 1880**

Read extract from the Minutes of Council: Resolved That in the opinion of the Council it is highly desirable that the competition between the three Boards of the Bristol, Avonmouth and Portishead Docks should cease. The Directors of the Portishead Dock appointed by the city are requested to consider whether a meeting between a Sub-Committee of each of the three Boards to arrange terms might not be attended with success.

Report of the Sub-Committee [appointed to consider the means to be taken to meet the competition from Avonmouth and Portishead Docks.]

The adoption of such a measure [as stated below] may be regarded as an expedient of only temporary necessity for it is certain that sooner or later the financial necessities of the rival docks must force their directors to adopt charges that will remunerate the Coys. and then the existing reasonable dues at your Dock may be reverted to.

To place your Dock on an equality with its rivals, it is necessary that the collection of the town and Wharfage dues on grain should be suspended for the present and that you should give to your customers some further accommodation [by] the undertaking by you of the labour involved (either wholly or in part) in doing the merchants' part of the discharge of the cargo [they believe the work can be done at the charge of the Dock and yet leave a gain in revenue on each transaction]. They firmly [believe] that the result of this recommendation will be that the bulk of the grain trade will revert to your Dock. After considerable discussion the report was received unanimously [Alderman Fox's amendment to defer reporting the above to Council until a reply had been received from the City Directors of the Portishead Coy. was negatived and the report sent]

**23 August 1880**

Town Clerk reported that the Council had made an order reducing the Town Dues on wheat etc. to one penny per 100 Tons [—for 12 months —] but as the Act of Parliament under which such Order was made required that the reduction should be advertised for 6 months before it should take effect [it could not come in effect until then]. Wharfage, Cannage and Plankage Rates on Wheat etc. would not be demanded.

**29 August 1880 (Calendared)**

Letters from both the Portishead Coy. and the Channel Dock Coy. expressing a willingness to negotiate an agreement about competition between the three docks. The Committee is also willing.

**27 September 1880**

The Town Clerk submitted draft Report of the special sub-committee which was approved. The Secretary was then instructed to forward it

with a request that the Mayor would convene a special meeting of the Council for the consideration thereof.

### Report of the Docks Committee to Council

Your Committee now report on the powers constructional, financial and for working purposes required in connection with the Bristol Docks Estate. It must be recognised that it is now only one of three docks each competing for the Bristol trade. This competition has already considerably diminished the income derived by the city from the shipping trade. It cannot be too clearly laid down that the time has arrived that, unless they desire to see their quays and harbour deserted, they should deal with the Docks Estate in the spirit worthy of owners of a great mercantile property, established by the outlay of a large capital, endowed with great natural and artificial advantages, but requiring to meet the demands of modern commerce, further development. It is with the recognition of the necessity that your Docks should be henceforth managed upon a policy of commercial competition that your Committee have [investigated] what works are required, what regulations and powers are required to enable your officers to conduct the business of the port and what measures of finance are necessary.

It will be necessary to obtain an Act of Parliament for the following objects viz. to enable the Corporation

1. To vary the rates authorised by the schedules attached to the Bristol Dock Act 1848, the Wharfage Act 1807, the Town Dues Act 1825 and the Encroachment Act 1837.
2. To make allowances out of the Dock Revenues in such cases as they think expedient for covering a portion or the whole of the cost of towage of vessels to and from Kingroad to Bristol.
3. And a portion or the whole of the cost of discharging cargo on to the quays or into trucks or barges.
4. To alter or modify such provisions in the Bristol Port and Channel Dock Act 1864 and Portishead Dock Act 1871 as exempt vessels entering the Bristol Docks from those Docks from payment of the Bristol rates.
5. To treat all barges or craft entering the Bristol Docks from Avonmouth or Portishead Docks as vessels coming from ports eastward of the Holmes and to levy dues on them accordingly.<sup>1</sup>
6. To take powers to levy a Dock Due not exceeding 3d per ton on all foreign goods brought coastwise into Bristol.
- 7-11 Additional powers for managing transit sheds, making Bye Laws, abolishing the present crane regulations and substituting new ones, making special regulations for the use of steam cranes and charging for the use of Corporation gear used by ships discharging cargoe [Calendared]
- 12-15 Powers to charge licence fees on seagoing vessels remaining in the Harbour more than one month and on barges and

- steam passenger vessels operating in the Harbour [Calendared]<sup>2</sup>
16. To take powers to levy dues on live animals imported direct from foreign countries.
  17. To acquire and work tug boats, to make Bye-laws for regulating the towing of vessels in the River Avon.<sup>3</sup>
  18. To raise the sum of £168,381 5s 0d by means of a perpetual 4 per cent Debenture Stock to pay off the 1,740 Dock Shares redeemable at £96 15s 5d per share, on account of interest on which there is now an annual rent charge of £6,734 15s 6d.
  19. To convert the whole of the various Dock Bonds amounting to £690,100 into a perpetual 4 per cent Debenture Stock.<sup>4</sup>
  20. To capitalize the following sums which have been expended out of surplus revenue, viz:— Railway Wharves 1 and 2 . . . £26,000; Foreign Animals Wharves £9000.<sup>5</sup>
  21. To raise a sum not exceeding £9000 for River Improvements as authorized by the Bristol Dock Act 1865.
  22. To apply from time to time towards the purposes of this Act any surplus revenue to be derived from the Dock Estate.<sup>6</sup>
  23. To rent land for constructing accommodation for the storage and forwarding of grain and other produce; to construct such accommodation and to lease the same to any private firm or subscribe jointly with any private firm in the capital required.
  24. To raise a sum of money not exceeding £50,000 for construction of such accommodation and to obtain general powers for warehousing similar to those in force at other ports.<sup>7</sup>
  25. To establish a sinking fund for the discharge of moneys borrowed under this Act . . . equivalent to one fortieth of the funds raised.

### **Summary of Financial Recommendations**

By creating 4 per cent Debenture Stock to redeem the Dock Shares, convert existing terminable Loans into permanent stock and capitalize spending on the Railway and Cattle Wharves and River improvements a nett gain of £27,074 will be made on the basis of a 3 per cent premium. This will reduce the total of Loans from £902,481 to £875,407 on which the charge for interest at 4 per cent will be £35,076, an increase of only £402 on the interest paid last year. From the £35,076 must be deducted the £4000 p.a. being the interest on the Portishead Dock Bonds now paid by the Corporation out of Borough Fund, leaving £31,016 to which must be added £1,100 on account of the [proposed] Sinking Fund so that annual interest charges will amount to £32,116. Assuming all charges except interest to be as last year viz. £16,795, interest to be £32,116 and the income about £53,000 there will be a surplus of £4,029 [no provision for storage accommodation for grain is included] as it may be assumed the Corporation would not raise capital for this purpose, unless they were well assured that the outlay would bring in a return, at least equal to

the annual charge for interest.

Your Committee think that compulsory pilotage from Lundy Island is now wholly unnecessary . . . but are of opinion that it may be necessary to retain compulsory pilotage eastward of the Holmes, and under any circumstances under one controlling authority. As this alteration will greatly reduce the cost to the shipowner the alteration should be accompanied by such a revision of rates as will compensate the pilots fairly for the extra skill and knowledge required for the pilotage in the inner as compared with the outer waters of their district.

<sup>1</sup> Notes in the report on clauses 1-5 explain that their purpose is to deal effectively with competition and remedy the unfairness to which the Avonmouth and Portishead Dock Acts gave rise.

<sup>2</sup> Notes on these clauses state that they were sought more with a view to putting a stop to abuse of the City Dock works than with the idea of making any revenue. The Harbour Master had reported that there were as many as 18 vessels ranging from 90 to 927 tons register which had been lying up in the harbour for periods of one to five years, and 28 hulks used for other purposes than conveyance of cargo to and from ships in the harbour. From there being no charge as at other ports it is notorious that many vessels come to Bristol simply to lie up and that trades are carried on in floating craft in order to escape paying rent and taxes of workshops on shore.

<sup>3</sup> Notes explain that better control is needed to prevent accidents and since tugs are not classified as steam passenger vessels, the Board of Trade takes no cognizance of them. Also if all tugs were under one control they might be worked more economically than at present.

<sup>4</sup> Notes explain that the advantage would be that the Corporation might get a considerable premium. The Manchester 4 per cent debenture Stock stands now at 7 and the Leeds stock at 5 premium. Taking the latter figure the Corporation would make a gain of £42,924. A large portion of the Bonds mature during the next three years so that considerable benefit would accrue almost immediately.

<sup>5</sup> The notes state that such extraordinary charges should be spread over a series of years as is the practice of private companies.

<sup>6</sup> The notes refer to the Engineer's report of 21 June and the Committee's recommendation of plan B to complete the removal of Suspension Bridge Point, the shoal below Round Point and the submerged rock near Tea and Coffee House Point and argue that seven eighths of the original scheme has been completed so that many of the large steamers such as the new Irish packets and American liners have been able to use the docks. It would be most unwise not to complete the remainder and the Engineer estimates that these can be carried out for £29,147. The Committee recommended that powers be taken to borrow £9000 leaving the remainder to be provided out of surplus revenues.

<sup>7</sup> The notes state that one of the chief causes of a diversion of the Grain and Provision Trades to other Ports is that no provision exists here for the inexpensive and proper storing and distribution of grain in stores contiguous at once to the waterside and to the railways. The present transit sheds are essentially working sheds for various steam liners requiring quick discharge and delivery of their general cargoes and are not available for storage of grain in bulk but only for its temporary deposit in sacks while what is needed is a store in which the merchant may keep his goods for an extended period.

## **11 October 1880**

The Town Clerk informed the Committee that their Report was presented to the council on 8th inst. when it was resolved by a majority that the Report as altered by clause 24 being expunged to be approved, and that the Mayor be requested [to summon] a special

Meeting of the Council to determine the expediency of promoting a Parliamentary Bill.

### **18 October 1880**

[At a meeting of representatives of Avonmouth, Portishead and Bristol Docks the Portishead delegation] declined to enter into a negotiation to maintain at all the Docks rates and charges not less than that of Bristol. Resolved that the result of this conference be reported to the Council and the Mayor be requested to convene a special meeting of the Council on 29 inst.

### **1 November 1880**

The Town Clerk informed the Committee that the Council had resolved that Mr. Wm Brice the person appointed to attend and vote at the meetings of the Bristol and Portishead Pier and Railway Company in respect of the Capital held by the Corporation should be requested to take immediate steps to induce the Directors to carry out the resolution of the Council of 10 August [i.e. to bring about agreement to end the competition].

### **22 November 1880**

Resolved unanimously that the salary of Mr. F.B. Girdlestone the Secretary be increased from £500 to £600 per annum.

Read a report on the result of the survey made by the Admiralty of Kingroad pointing out the great changes that have taken place in the depths of water since the last survey in 1867 and submitting a tracing of the new chart preparing by the Admiralty. Ordered that a copy of this tracing be made for this Committee and a copy of the Report and tracing be forwarded to the Committee likely [to be] appointed by the Council to enquire into the desirability and practicability of dockising the River — and that every precaution be taken to prevent the tracing being pirated before the publication of the Chart by the Admiralty.

### **3 January 1881**

[Secretary and others to attend to give evidence to the Royal Commission on Tonnage] The Secretary received general instructions as to which his evidence should be directed viz.

1st The adoption of the freight bearing capacity as the foundation and leading principle in fixing a standard for payment of dues on all vessels.

2ndly If it is found impracticable to adopt such a high standard then as a rough remedy for the injustice done to dock interests under the present system, the adoption of gross tonnage without any deductions whatever together with the retention of the law as to deck cargoes as set forth in section 23 of the Merchant Shipping Act of 1876 as the basis upon which dues should be paid.'

<sup>1</sup> The above down to 'present sysetm' is crossed out in pencil and pencilled comments initialled by the Secretary are 'This wd give dues on all space actually capable of being used for cargo. It wd . . . exclude engine room and bunkers'. On the end he has pencilled: This wd include engine room and bunkers but no space under awning decks. It wd give all space above tonnage deck under permanent cover. This proposition wd be more favourable than the other ? (illegible). The Secretary was also instructed that he might if pressed state that the Corporation would be prepared in case the first of the above recommendations is adopted to make such modifications in their present scale of dues on tonnage as might then appear just and reasonable to all parties concerned.

### **31 January 1881**

The propriety of the promotion of the Bristol Dock Bill was confirmed by an absolute majority of the whole number of the Council at the special meeting on 25th inst. and the Bill having been ordered to commence in the House of Commons was read a first time on 28th inst.

### **21 March 1881**

#### **Report of the Docks Committee to Council**

Your Committee have now to report that it is necessary in order to prevent the diversion of the important and growing trade in naptha, benzoline, and gasoline from the Bristol Docks, that the Council should take measures similar to those adopted with regard to the grain trade . . . by relinquishment of the Wharfage rate . . . and undertaking either wholly or in part the labour usually done by the importers in landing and delivering these cargoes into store.



**Docks Committee Minute Book Vol. 10**  
**25 April 1881–16 June 1884**

**16 May 1881**

Resolved by a majority to visit the site [of Green's Dock] and report. Resolved that the Sanitary Authority and Streets Improvement Committee be invited to depute some of their members to meet the said sub-committee [to discuss] the acquisition of Green's Dock and that no mention be made of this matter meanwhile in public.

A Deputation from the leading Sugar Importers and refiners attended and informed the Committee of the state of the trade, pointing out that the dues of 2s 3d per ton charged at Bristol on raw sugar as against 10d per ton at Greenock enabled refined sugar to be imported from that port to Bristol and sold cheaper than sugar refined in Bristol and urged a reduction of the Bristol dues to about 1s per ton to enable them to meet the Clyde competition.

**11 July 1881**

The Chairman reported that certain amendments and modifications having been made in the Bristol Docks Bill to meet the views of the opponents all petitions against the Bill had been withdrawn and the Bill being taken as unopposed in the House of Lords had been reported with amendments on 8th inst.

Read an application from the local secretary to the Seamen and Boatmen's Mission for the lease of a building site on the salvage lands at Cumberland Basin for erecting an iron room suitable for the purposes of the mission [to be considered].

**28 July 1881**

The Chairman submitted the report of the sub-committee appointed to conduct negotiations with the Avonmouth and Portishead Dock Boards. [It had] put before them a proposition to put an end to the existing competition between the three docks

1. That a common scale of Dues be arranged.
2. That a sum equal to the calculated amount of the gross Dues upon the Traffic of each Dock in each month at the agreed scale be paid into a Banking Account to be opened in the names of the Secretaries of the 3 undertakings not later than the \_\_\_\_\_ of the succeeding month.
2. That the total of the amounts so paid in be divided into 3 parts, one for each Dock, in proportion to the gross Revenue from Dues of each Dock in the last completed year.
4. Such an arrangement would leave the hands of each Dock Board free to charge its customers whatever rates and dues it chose. It might be entered for say 1 year certain, after which it might be continued for another similar period, it being understood that

each Board would then be at liberty to bring forward a suggestion that the actual Gross Revenue, derived from Dues during the period in which the arrangement had been in force, should be substituted for that now agreed upon as the basis for division of the common purse.

It will be seen that the merit of this arrangement consists in its inflicting an immediate penalty on the Dock that accepts less than the agreed tariff.

Your sub-committee regret to report that this proposition has not been accepted and modifications have been demanded on the part of the Avonmouth and Portishead Dock Companies which your sub-committee cannot recommend you to adopt.

After the conference your sub-committee received a letter from the Chairman of the Avonmouth and Portishead Boards as follows . . . [they] are prepared to accept these proposals on the understanding that they apply to the traffic which has been the subject of competition between the three Docks and to any further traffic which may, in the opinion of an independent Arbitrator become the subject of competition. We are prepared to recommend to our respective Boards the following alternative agreement. That a joint Committee of the three Dock Boards be appointed. That this Committee draw up a schedule of Dues, rate and charges. That nothing under the respective rates, dues and charges set out in such schedule be accepted at either Dock. That the joint Committee meet once a month to hear complaints (if any) as to evasion. That a substantial penalty be provided for any proved case of evasion.

Your sub-committee remark:

1. That it is impossible to say with any confidence what is or what is not competitive traffic and therefore it is evidently a matter of chance what view an arbitrator may take.
2. It would be a leap in the dark for the managers of Bristol Docks as they are perfectly unable to calculate what the effect of the arrangement may be.
3. That it is positively certain that the share of the benefits to be derived from the arrangement by the Bristol Docks would be vastly smaller than what would be derived under the proposal of your sub-committee.
4. That as the division of the purse is proposed to be made on the basis of the proportion of the competitive traffic done by the respective Docks during the last year, and as the Docks at the river mouth have obtained that traffic on terms which leave them no net profit, the basis of division is manifestly unfair.

Your sub-committee therefore sent the following reply

[They would be prepared to recommend] our original proposition subject to the following modifications viz. Dues on Sailing vessels of above 2000 and of Steamers above 1500 Tons Register not to be accounted for to the common purse; coastwise traffic also not to be accounted for as long as it is not subject to competition. A payment

of 10% on the amounts accounted for to be paid to the Dock doing the work towards working expenses.

Your sub-committee have received a further letter from the Chairman saying 'You now offer to exempt non-competitive coast-wise traffic but you only deal with other non-competitive traffic in respect of [vessels] of tonnage that have not hitherto frequented either of the three Docks. We are still of opinion that the agreement should be limited to competitive traffic . . . We also consider 10% for working expenses is quite inadequate [ask for consideration of their alternative proposal by the Docks Committee].

The great point of difference appears to be that the Avonmouth and Portishead Docks scheme points at and sees the importance of equal rates without any effectual measure of insuring them whereas [our scheme] will insure as far as possible that the agreement shall be strictly carried out.

Resolved (with one member dissenting) to approve the sub committee's scheme and request [it] to continue the negotiations.

### **Report of the Docks Committee to Council**

Your Committee are glad to report that the Bristol Dock Act 1881 has been passed and is now awaiting the Royal assent.

In reference to your Committee's Report of the 27th of September last, it will be seen that with the exception of the proposals to modify certain provisions in the Bristol Port and Channel Dock Act 1864 and the Portishead Dock Act 1871, which the Council considered worked unfairly as regards the Bristol Docks — the Act confers all the powers the Council thought necessary to apply for to Parliament.

Your Committee are not without hope that some satisfactory conclusion may be arrived at [in the negotiation with the Avonmouth and Portishead Dock Coys.]

### **8 August 1881**

That in any tide table compiled from the records of the [new automatic] tide gauge or published under the patronage of the Corporation; the height of water over the outer sill of the new lock at Cumberland Basin be given and also that the heights of both tides of the day be given and that the calculations for next year's table be made by Mr. Roberts of the Nautical Almanac Office and that Mr. Arrowsmith be allowed to publish the results on the above conditions and on such other conditions as to payment as the Engineer may deem expedient.

### **15 August 1881**

The Bristol Docks Act 1881 received The Royal Assent on 11 inst.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 44 and 45 Vict. cap. clxviii An Act to extend and amend the powers of the Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses of the City of Bristol as to the taking of Dues and Charges for the use of their Docks and to make further provisions for the accommodation of the

Trade of the Port. The minutes of evidence taken before the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Private Bills shows that the Corporation employed Sir Edmund Beckett Q.C. to promote the bill and that Mr Proctor Baker and the Secretary appeared before the Committee and gave extensive evidence.

**18 August 1881**

'specially summoned'

Read a letter from the Chairman of Avonmouth and Portishead Dock Coys.

'the Directors of the Portishead Coy. are advised that they have no power to make a valid agreement for pooling revenues in the way proposed and that the Corporation of Bristol being also without power to make such an agreement could be restrained from carrying it out by the objection of any ratepayer.

It is considered that the agreement so far as it provides for equalization of minimum dues and charges and payments would be within the powers of the Boards and probably if the agreement can be modified as to make the proposed payments clearly referable and proportionate to any such violations it could be brought within the law.

[If this can be done] we are quire prepared to recommend to our Boards [an agreement on these lines]. The Railway boards to join in this agreement and [to obviate your objection to a joint committee of Directors] the books of the several undertakings to be under the constant and unrestricted supervision of three public Accountants one appointed by each Board.

[Read reply of Docks Committee Chairman regretting that] the Portishead Coy. find legal difficulties in the scheme proposed by the Docks Committee. There appears to be in the plan now proposed a basis for agreement [provided that] in considering the Standard Tariff of rates and Dues, allowance is made for the cost of Towage up to Bristol so that the cost of bringing cargo to the quays of either Dock may be equal].

Read a further letter from the Chairman of the Avonmouth and Portishead Dock Coys. on the towage condition which is in effect that the minimum rates for Bristol Docks should be less than that fixed for Avonmouth and Portishead by an amount based on the towage rates. We regret our inability to hold out any hope of the adoption by our respective Companies of this condition.

[Read a reply by the Docks Committee Chairman suggesting] that a rate on vessels at Bristol less only by three pence per ton than that fixed for Avonmouth and Portishead should be agreed to.

[Read a reply by the Chairman saying] whilst not seeing our way to accept the proposal to its full extent [suggesting] a differential rate in favour of Bristol of  $\frac{1}{8}$  of the fixed rates on ships.

[Read a reply by the Docks Committee Chairman stating] we can proceed no further unless you accept unreservedly that the Avonmouth and Portishead dock dues shall be 3d per ton more than at Bristol [and] unless we receive before 5 p.m. tomorrow Wednesday

your acceptance of this condition the negotiation must be considered at an end.

[Read a reply by the Chairman stating] it must be obvious to you that having regard to the various rates on vessels it would be impossible for us to accept unreservedly the condition that there should be a uniform difference. [And since other matters have to be settled] we think we ought not to enter upon a piecemeal plan. [We] ask you to reconsider the terms of your letter.

The Chairman reported that the sub-committee had failed to come to any satisfactory agreement [and] the Committee were no longer bound by the offer [in the last letter] to which no reply had been received. Approved.

### **Report of the Docks Committee to Council**

[reports failure of negotiations]

Your Committee have given careful consideration to the question of a reduction of the dues on timber, deals and boards and conclude that a reduction of dues on deals and boards which are not high when compared with those charged at some other ports, would not materially increase the importation to the Bristol Docks. It is desirable that some reduction of dues so as to assimilate them to those charged at other ports, improve the trade of the City and stimulate several local industries which are now languishing, especially the sugar refining trade. Your Committee recommend the Council to avail themselves of the powers conferred by the Bristol Dock Act 1881 to reduce dues as follows

#### **Raw Sugar**

Petroleum and all mineral oils	from	2s 5	to	10d per ton
Log or hewn timber	from	2s 5	to	10d per ton
Linseed and cotton seed	from	1½	to	1d per gr.
Oilcake	from	1s 0d	to	6d per ton
Flour	from	1s 6d	to	6d per ton
Lard	from	2s 6d	to	1s 0d per ton
Canned Goods	from	2s 6d	to	6d per ton

### **29 August 1881**

[Read a letter from the Chairman of the Avonmouth and Portishead Docks Coys. proposing that Bristol drop its allowance on grain in return for the two docks ceasing to offer rebates on grain cargoes so putting an end to] the serious loss to each Dock. [Committee will consider]

[Letter from Chairman on consolidating dock and other dues] and suggesting that powers should be taken in the Omnibus Bill to be promoted in Parliament next session by the Corporation. Referred to Town Clerk.

[Messrs R. & W. King request] reduction of dues on palm oil and other West African produce. Consideration deferred.

**10 October 1881**

Resolved to recommend the Council to create a 4 per cent debenture stock of £804,781 5s 0d to provide for the redemption of the rent charge and the conversion of part of the bond debt [and] to issue £146,785 of such stock for the conversion of bonds for the like amount maturing within the next 15 months.

[Read a letter from Secretaries of Avonmouth and Portishead Dock Coys. regretting that Coys. have received no reply, stating that they had] stopped these extra rebates [but Bristol has not followed suit]. Resolved that the Secretary reply [denying that any allowance has been made by Bristol, refusing to enter into any piecemeal plan and regretting that the Coys., although wishing to reduce their rebates] do not propose to extinguish them altogether. So long as your Boards compete for business by reducing dues and charges Bristol has no choice but to follow your example.

**17 October 1881**

Read correspondence between the Secretaries of The Avonmouth and Portishead Dock Coys. and the Secretary to this Committee [The Secretaries first want to know whether it is a fact or not that no allowances or payments have been made towards the expenses of merchants discharging grain at Bristol. Mr. Girdlestone replied that it was a fact although] since August 1880 the Docks Committee have, as authorized by the Town Council, undertaken part of the labour of discharging cargoes which before that time had usually been done by the merchant. [The Secretaries reply that this contradicts previous statements by the Docks Committee and in any case amounts to an allowance. They cite their discontinuance of the additional rebate as evidence of a willingness to settle the dispute and say the Docks Committee first claimed it also wished to do so but later denied having said so. They complain that] the negotiations were summarily closed by your Chairman in spite of our offers of concession and requests for further meeting. We beg leave once more to repeat the proposals. In the meanwhile we intend as from this time to readjust our dues and working charges so as to make them, on the whole, more nearly comparable with those of Bristol. Reply deferred.

**24 October 1881**

Ald. Edwards moved that the Council be recommended to create a 3½ per cent debenture [rather than 4%]. Carried by a majority.<sup>1</sup>

Secretary's reply to the Avonmouth and Portishead Coys. (Calendared)

The Committee does not wish to have a long controversy over the interpretation of the correspondence between it and the Coys. It cannot accept the Coys. interpretation. The City Docks traffic has been diverted by the Coys. using differential charges and rebates. The recent adjustment at Avonmouth to make working charges there

more equal to those at Bristol still leaves Avonmouth offering merchants an inducement of  $\frac{3}{4}$ d to 1d per qr. Hence it is quite unreasonable to ask Bristol to increase its present charges. If the Coys. wish to increase charges to merchants so that they are greater than at Bristol the Committee is willing to discuss this and to raise the charges at Bristol to the highest point that can be borne without risking diverting the trade to other ports.

<sup>1</sup> *Minutes* 31 October 1881 shows the Committee recommending this to Council on the grounds that the mean quoted price of Debenture Stock of Manchester, Leeds, Blackburn, Birmingham, Liverpool and Nottingham was £3 10s 4d.

## **2nd December 1881 (Calendared)**

[Approved letters to Portishead and Avonmouth Coys. reiterating the Committee's view that towage constitutes a port charge for Bristol and its] willingness (as a compromise) to accept a differential rate of 3d per ton register, that is to say, that the dock dues levied on vessels should be 3d greater at Avonmouth and Portishead than at Bristol. My committee again repeat that if the charges on the ship be put, by their suggestion, on equality [at the three docks], they are ready to enter on a discussion of a uniform tariff on goods at once.

Approved letter from Chairman to the Mayor as follows:

- 1st The duty of the Dock Committee appeared to them to be to enter into no agreement under which traffic could be conducted at a cheaper rate, so far as port charges are concerned, at Avonmouth or Portishead than at the Bristol Docks.
- 2nd To obtain an agreement that would prevent the obstruction of traffic from Bristol by the offer of money advantages.
- 3rd To provide an efficient penalty for any infringement of the agreement.

The principle laid down by the Docks Committee [throughout] has been of cost to the ship and merchant at either dock and this they have defined to mean the cost of bringing a ship to the quays of either dock, and of putting goods on the waterside railway or into waterside stores *ex ship* shall be identical in all cases.

The contention that the docks at Avonmouth and Portishead have [added] enormously to the tonnage from foreign ports which has entered the whole port is not borne out by the figures for the twelve months ended 30 Nov 1881 which show a total register tonnage from foreign ports into the three docks of 498,551 tons, as against 497,038 tons for the same twelve months into Bristol Docks alone in 1876, the last year before the opening of Avonmouth Dock.

Their one object has been to prevent the City Docks being underbid. The Committee believe the principle which they have insisted on to be one of vital importance, and they are of opinion, that in the interest of the old city, the five Corporation directors ought most strenuously to have contended for its acceptance. The Committee must strongly dissent from the correctness of the state-

ment by the five Corporation directors of Portishead Dock [blaming the Docks Committee for the failure to reach an agreement]. The Committee feel that they have strained to the utmost to arrive at an agreement without infringing the principle they have laid down. They regret that the five directors of the Portishead Dock Coy. have not seen their way to recommend acceptance of this basis or to urge that a provisional trial be give to it.

The simplest solution of this question may be found by Avonmouth and Portishead ceasing to underbid Bristol.

## **12 December 1881**

The Secretary informed the Committee that he had heard that reports were being promulgated to the effect that preference was shown to Messrs Wm Baker & Sons grain importers in the rates charged for stacking goods on the quays and sheds.

Whereupon the Chairman requested the permission of the Committee to retire from the room and withdrew accordingly and the Deputy Chairman took the Chair. Resolved that a sub-committee consisting of The Vice-Chairman and Messrs Pethick, Gardner and Lane be appointed to investigate immediately.

Read letter from J. Dixon, General Manager, Avonmouth Dock Coy.

I regret that the tenor of the [recent letters to this Coy and to the Mayor] appears to preclude at least for the present the hope of our coming to terms on the question of competitive traffic.

A general difference in the towage rates of 3d per ton would amount to far more than the entire sum paid for towage and after full consideration, my Board feels it impossible to recommend the adoption of such an arrangement.

## **Report of the Docks Committee to Council**

During the last few years a great change has occurred in the shipping trade, steamers are now generally employed instead of sailing vessels. Owing to the larger original cost of steamers and their heavy working charges rapid discharge of Cargo is of far more importance to the owners than is in the case of sailing vessels and to ensure despatch modern practice demands that sheds should be provided for the reception of cargoes immediately vessels get into berth so that the cargoes may be discharged without waiting for the convenience or application of the consignees and that the steamer may not be delayed in taking in another cargo or proceeding to a loading port. It is this change of method that gives rise to the pressure that has been put of late upon your Committee for more shed accommodation.

The existing shed accommodation on the old City Quays and Railway Wharves amounts to only 142,606 square feet of which area 72,000 square feet consists of enclosed sheds and 70,000 square feet of open sheds.

The enclosed sheds are almost entirely given up to the temporary



reception of duty paying goods and of the cargoes of vessels working under the Customs Transit Regulations whilst the open sheds are devoted chiefly to the steam coasting trade.

Bristol has not kept pace with the needs of Steam Ship commerce in the provision of shed accommodation. For instance your Committee find that at Avonmouth and Portishead there are 500,000 square feet of shed accommodation in the former and 250,000 to 300,000 in the latter. It may be said that large warehouses are to be found in Bristol yet it is clear that they do not answer the purpose of Dock Sheds as they are not contiguous to both the quays and the railway, and the cost and inconvenience of cartage to and from them forbids their employment for goods for which temporary shelter only is required.

The existing sheds at Bristol have been fully occupied for many months past, and of late it has been impossible to supply sufficient accommodation to the steam trade from America and continental ports, and that nearly all the enclosed shed space has been used for temporary shelter and has been cleared within the 5 days allowed to consignees and that for such small area as has been used for a longer period which has at no time exceeded 1/26th part of the whole shed space a considerable annual sum has been received in fines.

[Report recommends building 2 sheds west of Princes' Shed of brick walls, slated roofs and asphalte floors of 50,200 square feet area at a cost of £7000 to be borrowed by issuing debenture stock at 3½% as permitted by the Bristol Dock Act 1881]

#### **16 December 1881**

The Town Clerk informed the Committee that the Council had Resolved That until the Dock Accounts for the current year ending 30 April next shall have been published shewing the result of the working of the existing Sheds, and until the result of the present Docks and Harbour Trust discussion shall also have been ascertained it is not expedient to make further expenditure in constructing Sheds and Warehouses.

The sub committee specially appointed at last meeting reported that they find that the rate charged for deposit goods on the open quays or under and within the sheds have been equally applied to all merchants and that no preference has been accorded to any individual firm.

The Town Clerk also reported that the Council had Resolved That the Docks Committee be requested to arrange an early conference with the Directors of the Avonmouth and Portishead Docks with a view of immediately arranging for differential rates of Dues on vessels and a uniform tariff on goods.

Approved Chairman's action in arranging to confer.

#### **4 January 1882**

[Town Clerk reported that he was the object of legal action by the

Attorney General to prevent the Corporation] from shipping or unshipping cargoes or supplying labour for such purposes or making allowances to merchants for such purposes. Council to be recommended to defend the action.

[Inserted in the Minutes] *Report of the Parliamentary Bills Committee to Council.*

Your Committee remind the Council that it referred to this Committee a Memorial of owners and occupiers of property in Bristol requesting the Council to consider the plans for the formation of a Bristol Port and Docks Commission and a Bristol Docks and Harbour Board respectively both having for their object the amalgamation of the Bristol Avonmouth and Portishead Docks. Your Committee report that they do not find either of them propose an amalgamation which would be advantageous to the owners of property and persons interested in the commerce of Bristol.

Your Committee report that the undermentioned Bills deposited for the ensuing Session of Parliament appear to interfere with or affect the local interest of the City or its inhabitants.

1. The Bristol Docks and Harbour Board Bill
2. The Bristol Ports and Docks Commission Bill<sup>1</sup>
3. The Bristol Port and Channel Dock Bill<sup>2</sup>
4. The City of Bristol Corporation of the Poor Bill<sup>3</sup>
5. The Bristol Water Works Bill<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The report listed detailed objections to both bills and argued that the proposed schemes did not protect ratepayers' interests particularly as regarded the composition of the proposed Board or Commission and their future financial stability. Neither reached the statute book.

<sup>2</sup> This became 45 and 46 Vict. cap. viii Bristol Port and Channel Dock Act (Extension of time).

<sup>3</sup> This became 45 and 46 Vict. cap. lxxx Bristol (Corporation of the Poor: Levy of Rates) Act.

<sup>4</sup> This became 45 and 46 Vict cap. clxxv Bristol Water Company (Enabling the Company to construct additional works) Act.

## 9 January 1882

Read a letter dated 7th inst. [from] the Secretaries to the Avonmouth and Portishead Docks setting forth the following proposals for an agreement

- a) No bonuses, rebates or allowances to be made by either of the three Docks except in fulfilment of existing contracts limited to an equal number of cargoes to each dock.
- b) A minimum standard scale of dues, tolls and charges to be fixed; and nothing below such standard to be accepted at either Dock — with the following exceptions
- c) The Bristol Docks may accept as dues on ships from foreign ports 2d per register ton less than is charged at Avonmouth and Portishead.

- d) Either of the three Docks may accept lower tonnage dues from Steam Ships of regular lines.
- e) Rates and regulation for transit sheds and warehouses to be the same at all three Docks.
- f) Labor charges at Portishead and Avonmouth to be not less than the cost of the similar labor at Bristol.
- g) Penalties to be provided in case of breach of agreement.
- h) In cases where collection of dues on grain etc. is at present virtually suspended at all three Docks the extent of reimposition of such dues to be settled by agreement between the three Boards.
- i) The agreement be terminable at fixed date (for revision or renewal or by notice by either Dock.

After considerable discussion resolved that the Committee are prepared to concur with all the above with the following exceptions That in clause (c) 3d should be substituted for 2d

That clause (d) which provides for exceptions in favor of liners be struck out

That in reference to clause (h) dues on grain about equal to those formerly paid in Bristol be reimposed.

**13 February 1881**

**Report of the Docks Committee to Council**  
(Calendared)

The printed exchange of letters between the 3 Docks shows that they are unable to agree as to the amount of differential rate on vessels, the exemption of "liners" from the agreement and on Avonmouth and Portishead's refusal to reimpose former charges on grain.

The Committee defended its demand for a 3d rather than a 2p differential, said it is advised that exempting liners would be illegal and restated its view that no arrangement will be satisfactory that does not allow of the immediate re-imposition at all three docks of charges on grain simultaneously with the cessation of all rebates and allowances. The Committee regretted that its negotiations had been unsuccessful.

**20 February 1882**

The Town Clerk reported that the meeting of the Council on the 14th inst. it was Resolved That the Mayor be requested to put himself in communication with the Dock Companies and the Docks Committee, to obtain from them such terms for rates as he may consider equitable, such terms to be placed before the Council.

**8 May 1882**

The Secretary informed the Committee that of the 154 barges carrying cargo within the Floating Harbour only 13 had as yet paid for the fresh licenses due thereon on the 1st inst. Most of the bargeowners refused to pay according to the scale laid down by the Bristol

Dock Act 1881.

Read a letter from the Coroner calling attention to the death of a child by drowning in the Feeder Canal below Skew Bridge attributed to his falling into the water in consequence of the edge of the towing path being of timber which became slippery from the wash of the water caused by passing barges. [Engineer to have nails driven into the surface of the timber].

The Secretary submitted a statement showing that under the rules proposed by the Royal Commission on Tonnage the net register tonnage of the Bristol City Docks would have been increased by about 9 p.c. during 1881 [Committee approved the recommendations of the Royal Commission].

The Chairman submitted by desire of the Mayor a draft memorandum of basis of agreement with the Avonmouth and Portishead Dock Companies for cessation of the existing competition being the result of the negotiations carried on by him during the last 2½ months.

The Chairman informed the Committee that on all other points than those named in the above memorandum the conditions and terms as laid down in the letter of 7th Jany. last from Messrs Dixon and Daniel were to be adhered to.

And after considerable discussion, it was resolved unanimously that the modifications now submitted of the proposed agreement for a differential due on vessels and a uniform tariff on goods be approved.

**15 May 1882**

### **The Report of the Docks Committee to Council**

Read the following copy of a letter by the Mayor to Mr. Charles Nash, Ald. Ford and Ald. Proctor Baker.

I beg to submit the following points of agreement which have been provisionally approved by all the parties concerned.

That the Dock Dues on all vessels arriving from foreign parts may be 2½d per Register Ton less at Bristol than at Avonmouth and Portishead notwithstanding any reduction that may be made on Liners, it is understood that Bristol may still charge on such vessels 2½d per ton less.

That each dock may be at liberty to allow not exceeding 50 per Cent Discount off the Dues on New Liners but that neither Dock shall allow more than 25 per Cent upon the old liners until a larger Discount than 25 per Cent be allowed on new, when each Dock will be at liberty to allow a Discount on Old Liners corresponding with that allowed upon New Liners.

That the Town Dues and Wharfage equal to 1½d per Quarter be reimposed at Bristol Docks and that a Dock Due of 1½d per Quarter be levied at Avonmouth and Portishead.

All the other conditions to be in accordance with the letter of Messrs Dixon and Daniel dated 7 January 1882

[Agreement to last 12 months with option to renew. The Council resolved to authorize Docks Committee to carry it into effect]

Resolved to inform all barge owners of the intention to take proceedings against any of them using the Lock without a licence.

### **5 June 1882**

The Chairman submitted draft of the proposed agreement with the Avonmouth and Portishead Dock Coys. He stated that the said documents had been approved as he thought finally by the Chairmen of the other 2 Docks at a meeting held at his office on 2nd inst. but that he had received letters from both of the said Chairmen in which fresh objections were raised, particularly on the clause defining 'liners' to which objections he could not recommend the Committee to assent. [Resolved unanimously to assent to terms as agreed on 2nd inst. Chairman authorized to assent to any modifications he thinks expedient after conferring with the other Chairman].

### **Report of the Docks Committee to Council.**

To carry out [the above agreement] it is necessary to re-impose the City dues on grain as charged previously to the recent reductions made to meet the competition and to establish a uniform tariff of rates on goods for the three docks — to effect which many alterations of the existing Dock rates and City dues by raising some and lowering others must be made; but it is proposed to maintain the former proportions between such rates and dues.

The result of this arrangement financially will your Committee believe even if there be no improvement in the trade done during the last year, be an increase of revenue to the City of about £4000 per annum.

### **2 July 1882**

[Letter from Engineer to Chairman] I beg to inform you that after much consideration I have come to the decision of resigning, before the next Winter. There are now no special works on hand and it may be a favourable time for making the proposed change. [signed Thos. Howard]

Resolved unanimously that this Committee in accepting Mr Howard's notice of his intention to resign desire to express their regret at losing his valuable services . . .

### **17 July 1882**

After considerable discussion Mr Lane moved that the Council be recommended that the appointment of Engineer be thrown open to competition and that the salary given be £600 a year.

Mr. Pethick moved as an amendment That in view of the experience and local knowledge acquired by Mr Howard it is desirable to retain for a limited period his services as Consulting Engineer at an annual salary of £150 a year.

Carried by a majority. [Mr. Lane moved that the post be adver-

tised for open competition, the salary to be £500 p.a.] Mr Wills moved as an amendment That this Committee being satisfied with the conduct of the assistant Engineer Mr J.W. Girdlestone and the recommendation of his senior Mr Howard, recommend to the Council the appointment of Mr Girdlestone to the post of Chief Engineer at a salary of £500 a year. The question being put on the amendment the same was not carried the votes for and against being equal. The question was then put on the original motion and the same was carried by a majority.

**31 July 1882**

**Report of the Docks Committee to Council.**

Your Committee have to report that the yearly rent charge payable to the Bristol Dock Company was redeemed on 1st May and £168,381 5s. of the Bristol Corporation 3½ per cent Debenture Stock was issued for this purpose. Your Committee have issued £115,278 10s like Stock part of an amount of £148,785 like Stock issued for the conversion or paying off of Bonds of the Corporation bearing interest at 4 per cent which became payable during the year commencing 1st November last leaving £33,506 10s available for bonds becoming payable in September next. [Seek Council's approval for issuing £105,450 for paying off or converting the debt incurred under the Bristol Harbour Railway Act 1873 into Debenture Stock].

**14 August 1882**

Resolved that £7000 be expended in the erection of Sheds in accordance with the recommendations of the report of the Docks Committee on 13th December last And it was resolved that Mr John Ward Girdlestone be appointed Engineer at a salary of £500 per annum and that he be required to devote the whole of his time to the duties of his office.

**9 October 1882**

Resolved unanimously that it would be highly detrimental to the shipping interests of the Port of Bristol to close Green's Dock [This to be sent in answer to an enquiry from the Council's Finance Committee].

**16 October 1882**

Read a letter from Mr W. Proctor Baker asking the Committee to allow him to retire from the office of Chairman.<sup>1</sup> Resolved That the Committee wish to express their high sense of the zeal and ability with which he has conducted the business of Bristol Docks during the last two years, and their strong hope that he will after such absence as the regrettable circumstances of the case necessitate, consent to again place his valuable assistance at the disposal of the Committee.

<sup>1</sup> W. G. Neale, *op cit* p 45 observed that no clear reason can be given for his

resignation. It may have been health reasons, or the part he had played in persuading the Committee to bear the cost of labour in discharging grain cargoes, the legality of which was being contested in the courts, or it may have been his preoccupation with planning his great new mill on Redcliff Backs which made his firm the foremost millers in the west country.

### **6 November 1882**

The Engineer's attention was called to the instructions given to his predecessor to report as to the best mode of dealing with labourers and other weekly servants of long service who become inefficient, by means of a provident fund or otherwise and to report as to the condition, number, ages, length of service etc. of the present staff of workmen under his control.

### **13 November 1882**

The Dockmaster reported the gallant rescue of a woman out of Cumberland Basin by Thomas Goodland dockman on the evening of the 10th inst. [Awarded a gratuity of £2].

### **18 December 1882**

The Engineer submitted a report on the present condition, ages and length of service of the staff of workmen under his control together with an exhaustive scheme for dealing by means of a Voluntary Provident Fund with labourers of long service who become inefficient. He further reported as to reductions which he considers could be carried out gradually in the existing staff without detriment to the efficient working of the Dock Estate.

### **2 January 1883**

The Sub-Committee for Finance [reported] that there were legal objections to adopting the Provident Fund scheme [proposed by the Engineer who was to re-consider]. It advised the Committee to instruct the Engineer to reduce at once such [permanent] staff to the extent set forth in his report, and that in case of men of good character and long service this sub-Committee be empowered to give such compensation in lieu of notice not exceeding 3 months pay as they may deem expedient.

### **4 June 1883**

Resolved that this Committee will be glad to renew the Working agreement now in force between the Bristol, Avonmouth and Portishead Dock Boards for a further term of 12 months.

### **11 June 1883**

Read also copy of the Minutes made by the Docks Joint Committee at their meeting held on the 6th inst when the following resolutions

were passed viz: (1) To recommend to the respective Boards to increase the dues on grain by  $\frac{1}{4}$ d per quarter and on flour by 2d per ton on condition that the Sharpness Docks will agree to do the same.

(2) That inasmuch as the charge for stevedoring at Bristol which is not under the control of the Docks is contrary to the spirit of the Agreement it be recommended that the total of the Dock dues and labor rate for discharging at each dock should be as far as possible uniform, even if for this purpose the differential rate in dock dues in favor of Bristol should have to be given up.

After considerable discussion [it was resolved that such matters as were] involved in the above resolutions should be a matter of negotiation between the respective Boards and should not be dealt with by the members delegated to serve on the Joint Committee.

And in regard to the suggested increase in dues it was resolved that with Swansea, Cardiff and Newport competing for the trade and considering the discount of freight given to vessels ordered to discharge at these ports such a measure would be most prejudicial to the interests of the Bristol Docks.

## 25 June 1883

That the Sub-Committee for Finance consider what arrangement to make in consequence of the resignation of Capt. S. Green and as to the duties which will in future develop upon the Dockmaster.

### Report of the Docks Committee to Council.

Your Committee beg to submit the Annual Accounts of the Dock Estate for the year ended 30 April 1883

	£	s	d
Total Revenue	52,052	15	4
Ordinary Expenditure			
Maintenance Dredging, Salaries etc.	16,618	17	2
Interest and Sinking Fund	30,186	10	9
1st Instalment of Expense of issuing Debenture Stock	1,724	7	10
	48,529	15	9
Leaving a Balance of	3,522	19	7
The Expenditure on New Works	4,324	19	6
Total Expenditure has exceeded Receipts by	801	19	11

A further sum of £5964 18s. 5d. has been expended out of Capital and raised by Debenture Stock on account of the New Sheds already erected on Princes' Wharf and those now in course of erection on Welsh Back. The Sheds on Prince's Wharf have been in full and constant use.

In addition to the moneys received for the use of these sheds



(which after paying rates taxes, and management charges amount to at least  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent per annum on the cost) the accommodation thus afforded for landing goods under shelter, close to the rail, has undoubtedly contributed greatly to the increased tonnage which has of late resorted to the Docks.

As compared with the previous year there has been an increase of 70,760 tons in the tonnage of foreign and coastwise vessels, and increase of 333,237 quarters in the imports of grain, and a considerable addition in the imports of deals, hides, ores, raw sugar, rosin, seeds, spelter and valonia.

Your Committee regret that so limited use has been made during the past year of the Foreign Animals Wharf whilst the importation of live animals from near foreign countries has, owing to the prevalence of disease in those countries been totally prohibited by the Privy Council, the imports from the United States and Canada have largely decreased owing it is believed to the high price current for stock on the American Continent and the regulations for compulsory slaughter on arrival in England.

Imports on a moderate scale have, however, now recommenced from Spain and the United States.

As regards the revenue derived from Dues your Committee would remind the Council of the great modifications and reductions which have been made therein from time to time during the last few years. Taking the tonnage which has entered the City Docks and the actual quantities of goods imported during the year ended the 30th ult. your Committee estimate that had it been possible to charge the rates which were in force prior to 30th August 1881, the Dock Revenue would have been larger by at least £5,011 and City Dues by £2,706.

Your Committee are glad to report that notwithstanding the before-mentioned reductions the revenue from both the Dock and City Dues for the past financial year shows a considerable improvement over that of the previous year. This is chiefly due to the understanding as to the tariff of charges arrived at between your Docks and those at Avonmouth, Portishead and Sharpness which came into force on the 13 June, 1882, when the scale of Dues on Grain, which had been previously greatly reduced, was reimposed.

Taking the figures for the last seven financial years the total revenue from Rates and Dues accruing to the Dock Estate and the City has been as follows.

In	Dock Estate	City Dues	Total
	£	£	£
1877	62,384	24,228	86,612
1878	61,368	20,665	82,033
1879	58,506	19,261	77,676
1880	59,428	17,378	76,806
1881	59,236	14,315	73,551
1882	49,801	9,816	59,617
1883	52,053	13,790	65,843

### Engineer's Report

I beg to report that the Dock Works generally are in good condition; that two enclosed two-storied Sheds have been erected on Prince's Wharf; that a large and commodious Shed is in course of construction on the Welsh Back and will shortly be ready for use; that the whole of the rock at Suspension Bridge point has been removed, but that there still remains here a considerable amount of dredging and faggoting to be effected; that at the Round Point vigorous steps are being taken for the removal of the rocky shoal lying in the bed of the river, and that in about 3 years time the shoal will, by the aid of the improved rock boring and blasting appliances shortly available, probably be wholly removed.

### 2 July 1883

Resolved that it is desirable that a Graving Dock should be made to accommodate the largest class of vessels that can come into the City Dock. [Engineer to report on feasibility and cost]

Read a letter dated 25 June from Mr John Bush the Solicitor for Mr Ward the owner of the present dock offices at 19 Queen Square asking if the Committee would be open to treat for the purchase of the property now in their occupation and the adjoining premises as one purchases.

Resolved That consideration be deferred and that the Chairman be requested to view the vacant premises at No.35 Prince St belonging to the Corporation and report as to the suitability of the same for dock offices.<sup>1</sup>

Read a report from the Traffic Manager on the insufficiency of the shed accommodation especially in that afforded to the grain trade and after considerable discussion it was resolved that the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Mr W. Proctor Baker communicate with Mr Grierson, Manager of the Great Western Railway Coy. with the view of ascertaining whether his Board would be disposed to erect a granary on the railway wharf.

<sup>1</sup> Minutes 23 July, 13 August, 10 September and 12 November show the Princes Street premises being rejected as too large and unsuitable and the sale to the Corporation by Mr Ward of 19 and 20 Queen Square for £2,575.

### 9 July 1883

The Sub-Committee for Finance submitted a report on the reductions made since the 2nd Jany. last in the Engineer's and Dockmaster's pay sheets, resulting in an annual saving of £1521 and recommended that until suitable employment can be found for them the Secretary be authorised to pay a sum not exceeding 3s 6d per week to the 16 men of good character who have done long and faithful service [Approved].

That Capt. S. Green's resignation [as Dockmaster] be accepted.

**16 July 1883**

After considerable discussion it was resolved to appoint a Dockmaster on a salary of £270 per annum with the use free of rent and taxes of the house containing the Dock Master's office at Cumberland Basin . . . and to appoint an Assistant Dockmaster on a salary of £150 per annum.

[Captain J. Tomlinson, now Deputy Dockmaster was appointed].

**12 November 1883**

The Secretary submitted a report as to the intended removal of the "City" Line of steamers from Bristol to Avonmouth and whilst quoting the reasons alleged by Messrs C. Hill & Sons, the Managing owners for adopting this course, informed the Committee that from information received he believed the real reason thereof lay in the pressure brought to bear on them by the consignees who appear to obtain better terms for removal of their Goods at Avonmouth both as to cost and time than he is able to give under the working agreement or they themselves can obtain at Bristol.

And the Secretary suggested as the Bristol trade would be seriously prejudiced and that as no reply had been received from the Avonmouth Company to his enquiries as to the practical working of the arrangements now in force at Avonmouth for such 'liner' traffic that the matter should at once be referred to the Joint Committee.

[Chairman to seek an explanation at once from the Avonmouth Coy's Chairman].

**19 November 1883**

A deputation consisting of Mr Burton Managing Agent of Burton's Cardiff and Newport traders, Mr Stock Agent for the Continental traders and Mr Davies, Secretary to the Bristol Steam Navigation Company waited on and explained to the Committee the serious loss of consignments of heavy goods from South Wales, the general difficulty they meet with in carrying on their present lines, owing to the scanty shed accommodation now afforded them, also to the great increase of their traffic which would assuredly ensue if sheds were allotted to their several lines as to the Cardiff and Glasgow traders.

The Chairman after explaining that the difficulty in providing the accommodation asked for arose not from the disinclination of the Committee but entirely from the want of space pointed out that something might perhaps be done on the quay sites now being cleared on the Green Dock Estate.

It was resolved that a sub-committee be appointed to view the various sites including the Jail available for the erection of a large granary and to consult some of the leading corn merchants thereon and report that the Committee may consider whether any action can be recommended to the Council in this matter.

The Vice-Chairman informed the Committee that at an interview

which he had had with Mr Charles Hill the latter had assured him that the dispute as to pilotage and insufficient shed accommodaton were the only reasons which had determined him to remove the "City Line" of steamers from Bristol [Chairman and Vice-Chairman to endeavour to settle dispute].

### **10 December 1883**

The Committee having been specially summoned, a discussion took place as to the expediency of reporting to the Council on the question of shed extension on the Welsh Back.

A deputation of traders headed by F.F. Fox Esq and representing 22 of the leading firms engaged in the Oil, Fruit Petroleum and Grain trades then waited on the Committee to protest against the erection of any further closed sheds on the site in question on the ground of the large quay space required for the landing and sorting of their goods and that the site is one of the few open quay spaces available for this purpose.

[After] the Deputation retired and further discussion it was resolved that it is not expedient to erect any more closed sheds on the Welsh Back. Resolved also in view of the urgent necessity of providing for a very considerable extension of quay and shed accommodation near the heart of the city, that the Chairm. and Mr Wills talk the matter over with the City Surveyor.

### **7 January 1884**

Mr. Bezley Agent for the London, Penzance and Bristol line of vessels had an interview with the Committee on the subject of the provision of quay and shed accommodation on the ground lately acquired by the Corporation at Deans Marsh.

And after considerable discussion it was resolved that extended quay and shed accommodation in this locality is imperatively necessary. [The Finance Committee of the Council to be asked either to provide this or to grant the site to the Docks Committee so that it might do so].

### **21 January 1884**

The Engineer also submitted a further report on the plant necessary for the prosecution of River Works F & G with speed and economy, and submitted tenders he had received for the tug boat with special crane, pump and electric light apparatus as therein specified.

It was then resolved to accept the tender (it being the lowest) of Messrs Edward Finch and Coy. Limited of £4,700 for the tug "Bulldog" with engines, boilers etc. complete, that of Messrs Stothert & Pitt (being the lowest) of £591 for the crane and those as recommended by the Engineer for the pump, pies, electric light apparatus etc. amounting to £709, the total cost of the boat with apparatus being thus £6000.

**18 February 1884****Report of the Docks Committee to Council**

Your Committee have given the question [of providing a Graving Dock] much thought and have obtained from the Docks Engineer a very exhaustive report thereon, accompanied by elaborate plans, and they have also had prepared by the Secretary a memorandum on the financial aspect of the subject.

Looking to the heavy outlay necessary for the establishment of such Graving Dock as the Council have decided it is desirable to provide and to the very precarious revenue likely to be derived therefrom, your Committee apprehend that the Council will not consider it expedient to proceed with any scheme for the provision of such accommodation at present.

Your Committee report that they have received suggestions for the establishment of a less costly appliance, that known as a Gridiron for enabling vessels to be examined and small repairs to them to be executed without the delay and expense of taking them into dry docks.

Your Committee urge on the council the expediency of constructing a Gridiron at the Cumberland Basin site at a probable cost not exceeding £6500. Your Committee have no hesitation in stating that such an addition to the appliances of the Dock Estate is likely to prove not only remunerative but very advantageous to the trade of the Docks. Your Committee recommend that the cost of this work be provided out of the sum of £44,000 which the Council were authorised by the Bristol Dock Act 1881 to borrow for the general purposes of the Docks.

**25 February 1884**

The Report of the Committee appointed to consider the terms on which the Corporation may purchase the Avonmouth and Portishead Docks.

Your Committee, being of opinion that one of the strongest reasons in favour of the acquisition by the Corporation of the undertakings in question is the desirability of getting rid of the competition to which, while they remain in other hands, the Bristol Docks are subject, and that to effect this it would be useless to acquire one of the undertakings without the other, have devoted their attention to endeavouring to ascertain what price the Corporation could be advised to give for the two undertakings.

Your Committee having after much deliberation arrived at a conclusion as to the terms on which they could advise the Council that the Corporation might under the circumstances advantageously acquire the undertakings the Mayor proceeded to confer with the Chairman of the Companies in relation to the terms which they had intimated would probably be entertained for their respective undertakings and endeavoured to ascertain the lowest terms that they could recommend their Shareholders to accept.

The Mayor after long negotiation with the Chairman has informed

your Committee that each of them is prepared to recommend his respective Companies to sell their undertakings to the Corporation of Bristol as from the Fifteenth day from the passing of the necessary Act in the present session at the prices following viz:-

**AVONMOUTH** — The undertakings of the Bristol Port and Channel Dock Company and the Bristol Port and Channel Dock Warehouse Company Limited for £529,000 Bristol Corporation 3½ per cent Debenture Stock of which £450,000 is to bear interest from the day aforesaid and £75,000 from the expiration of five years from that day and, if within six months after the passing of the Act the Council shall be satisfied that the Companies have accurately estimated the amount recoverable in future from the Railway Companies for services to be rendered at the dock at the rate of £1,750 per annum calculated on the traffic for the year 1883, a further sum of £25,000 like stock to bear interest from the expiration of 7 years from the day aforesaid — provided that if the Council shall not be so satisfied they shall be entitled to call on a valuer to be named in the Act or appointed by the Board of Trade to determine whether the Companies have over estimated such amount and if so to what extent and such £25,000 stock shall be reduced proportionately to the deficiency — and the value of the loose plant and stores of the Companies on the day aforesaid to be ascertained by valuation between the parties and paid in cash within two months therefrom

**PORTISHEAD** — The Dock undertaking of the Bristol and Portishead Pier and Railway Company and the undertaking of the Portishead Warehouse Company Limited for £250,000 Bristol Corporation 3½ per cent Debenture Stock of which £225,000 is to bear interest from the day aforesaid and £25,000 from the expiration of five years from that day and the value of the loose plant and stores of the Companies on that day to be ascertained by valuation between the parties and paid in cash within two months therefrom. The purchase to include not only the existing warehouses and machinery but also the granaries warehouses and complete machinery and appliances arranged or provided for by the Companies and the Corporation to participate with the other shareholders in the dock undertaking on the proceeds of the sale in respect of the shares it holds therein.

Your Committee recommend the Council to accept these terms provided all matters of detail can be arranged and all necessary Parliamentary powers and provisions for the protection of the Corporation obtained to the satisfaction of the Council.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 47 and 48 Vict. cap. cclv Bristol Dock Act enabled the Corporation to buy the Avonmouth and Portishead Dock Coys. and their respective Warehouse Coys.

## INDEX

- Adams, Joseph, pilot, 137  
 Admiralty, 11, 40, 130, 184  
 Anchor, shipping line, xxvi (n)  
 Anchorage and moorage fees, xxxiv, 43, 56, 112, 116  
 Appledore, 128  
 Ariel rowing club, 139  
 Armstrong, Sir W and Co., 147  
 Arrowsmith, printers, 188  
 artillery, 43, 49  
 artisans, 140  
 Ashmead, Frederick, Surveyor, 57  
 Attorney-General, 195  
 auctioneer, x  
 Australia, 19  
 Avon, river, xxx  
   angling in, 80  
   bathing in, 74  
   entrance to 76, 130, 170 *see also* Swash  
   Howard's Further Report on, 38 (n)  
   improvement, effects of, 161; estimates  
     of cost, 51-2, 78; proposals for, xi,  
     34, 44, 49, 61-2, 178-9; progress  
     of, xii, 81, 85, 88-9, 92, 109-10,  
     118, 122, 127, 203, 205; spending  
     on, 84, 91, 99, 106, 126, 132, 148,  
     152, 176, 182  
   problems of navigation, 43, 50, 156-7,  
     164, 178  
 Avonmouth Dock, cattle trade at, 151;  
   cost of, xxv; construction of, xxv,  
   98; finances of, xxvi; grain trade  
   at, xxvii, 140; imports into, 159;  
   ocean steamers at, 159; originating  
   Act, xxv(n); petroleum trade at,  
   155-6; promoters of, xxv(n); propo-  
   sals for dock, xi, 32, 41-2(n), 60;  
   proposed new entrance, 169-170;  
   Royal Edward, xxviii; timber  
     trade at, 141; vessels entering, 144  
 Avonmouth Dock, effect of competition  
   with city docks, xxvii, 97, 140-1,  
   151-2, 155-9, 176-181, 183(n),  
   185-6, 191; abortive proposals to  
   end competition, 186-196; agree-  
   ment to end, 197, 200-2; purchase  
   by City Council proposed, 160-4;  
   resisted, 166; completed, xxvi,  
   206-7  
 Avonmouth Dock Co. (Bristol Port and  
   Channel Dock Co.)  
   Acts of Parliament  
   Bristol Port and Channel Dock  
     Act (1864) 27 & 28 Vict. c 241,  
     xxxv (n), 59(n), 68, 174, 188  
   Bills  
     Bristol Port and Channel Dock bill  
       (1864), 59  
     Bristol Port and Channel Dock bill  
       (1870), 89-90  
     Bristol Port and Channel Dock bill  
       (1871), 95  
     Bristol Port and Channel Dock bill  
       (1881), 169-170, 195  
   Charges to importers, 151, 154; comp-  
     arison with city docks, 161, 165,  
     170-3; remissions to grain impor-  
     ters, 178; *see also* Avonmouth  
     dock, effect of competition with  
     city docks.  
   Directors of, removed from Docks  
     Committee, 154  
 Avonside Engineering Co., 101  
 Azof, sea of, xxiii, xxiv  
 Babbage, GG, purveyor, 140  
 bacon, xviii, 113, 158-9  
 Bailey, James, pilot, 137

- Baker, Captain, Harbour Master, 125 *see also* Harbour Master
- Baker, William Proctor, Docks Committee member, xxvii–xviii, 143, 151, 157, 161, 166, 170–1, 173, 189(n), 197, 199, 200(n), 203
- Baker, William and Sons, grain importers, 143
- Baker, William, contractor, 20
- bankers, *see also* Cave, Baillie and Co. and Miles, Harford, Battersby and Miles
- barges, 125, 163, 181; licence fees for, xxxix, 196–8; owners of, 98; *see also John*, steam barge
- Barging, 176
- barley, 113
- Barnstaple, 128
- Barry, Jeremiah, pilot, 137
- Bath Bridge, destruction of, 26 *see also John*, steam barge
- Bath, river navigation to, 98, 103, 109
- Bathurst Basin, entrance lock, 30; swing bridge, 127; tramways at, 82, 84, wharf, xi, 127, 153, 160, 168, 176; sheds, 132–3
- Bawn, James, Crane Master, xxxiv(n), 82–3 *see also* Crane Master
- beans, 113
- Beaufort, Duke of, 15
- Beaumaris, xxi
- Beckett, Sir Edmund Q.C., 189(n)
- Bedford, G.A Captain R.N., 77(n), 130
- Bedminster, 82; Bridge, 58, 118, 148
- Beechey, F.W. Captain, 25(n)
- beef, 113, 159
- Belfast, xiii, xxxix
- Beloe, William, Docks Committee member, 32
- benzolene, 185
- Berham, P.H. Trinity House, 77
- Bessone Mr, regatta chairman
- Bideford, 128
- Birkenhead, xxii, xxxviii, 54
- Birmingham, xxiv(n), 192 (n)
- Blackburn, 192(n)
- Black Sea ports, xxii–xxiii, 152, 161, 165
- Blackwell, Sir Thomas, engineer, 12, 17(n), 18, 20–1, 28 *see also* Docks Committee, Engineer
- Blandford, Henry, contractor, 20
- boards, 190
- Board of Health, 56–7, 61, 74, 76, 89, 93, 97, 100 *see also* City Council as Local Board of Health
- Board of Trade, xxv, xxxviii, 77, 97, 98, 101, 123, 126, 130, 136, 142, 148, 163, 170, 175, 207
- boiler makers, 149
- Borough Fund, as security for borrowing, xxxviii, 62, 95, 112, 115, 176, 179
- Borough 4d rate for dock purposes, ix, xii, xxxi, xxxiii, xxxv–xxxviii, 1–2, 5–6, 15, 22, 41, 45, 64, 105, 112, 148, 160
- Bowman, A.H., junior clerk, 155
- brandy, 83
- Brazil, 108
- Brice, William, Town clerk, 63, 83, 142–3, 184 *see also* Town Clerk
- Bright, Robert, Free Port leader, xxi(n)
- Bristol, Bridge, 110–111; Channel, xxvii, 95, 117, 135; Cocoa Missions, 119; *Daily Post*, 166; *Daily Times and Mirror*, 157; General Steam Navigation Co., 28, 30, 50, 138, 204; rank among U.K. ports, xii, xiii, xv, xvii, xx; rateable value, xii; Record Office, xxx; Tramway Co., 168–9; Water Co., 144(n), 195
- Bristol Docks
- Acts of Parliament
- Bristol Dock Transfer Act* (1848) 11 & 12 Vict.c 43, vii, ix, xx, xxi, xxxviii, 1, 65, 112, 181, ; borrowing under, ix, xxxv, 2, 6, 8, 12, 13, 20, 48, 61; deed, 1; discharge of debt under, 121; report of City Council's committee on, 1, 5
- Bristol Dock Act* (1865) 28 & 29 Vict.c33, 66(n), 71, 77, 81, 89, 96, 106, 182
- Bristol Dock Act* (1881) 44 & 45 Vict.c168, 188(n), 190, 194, 197, 206
- Bills
- Bristol Dock bill (1864), 61–3
- Bristol Dock bill (1865), 64–5
- Bristol Dock bill (1880), 169–170, 173
- Bristol Dock bill (1881), 181, 185–6
- Bristol Dock Co., vii–viii, xxxv; debts of, vii, ix; promissory notes of, ix(n)37, 40, 75; records of, xxix; redemption of rent charge to, 132, 199; shares of, ix(n), 105, 182; sinking fund of, ix



- Bristol Port and Channel Docks Co. *see*  
     Avonmouth Dock Co.  
 Brittan, Henry, secretary Local Marine  
     Board, 123  
 Broad Pill, 102, 169-170, 173  
 Broad Quay, 28, 48, 66-7  
 Brock and Bruce, Messrs., contractors,  
     168  
 Brotherhood, Rowland, contractor, 71-2  
 Brown, John, pilot, 137  
 Brown, Joseph, pilot, 127-8  
 Browne, Professor, of Veterinary Dep-  
     artment, Privy Council 142  
 Brunel, Isambard, Kingdom, engineer,  
     viii, ix, xxix, 8, 9(n), 35; his new  
     lock, viii, 8-10, 22, 27, 78-80, 108,  
     121, 127, 131, 132  
 Brunlees, J, engineer, Avonmouth Dock,  
     92  
 Bryant, William, purveyor, 140  
 Bulgaria, xxiv  
 Bull Point, 128, 136  
 buoys, 76  
 Burges, Daniel, Town Clerk, 1, 3(n), 7,  
     11, 24, 83, 123 *see also* Town Clerk  
 Burns U.J., master of S.S. *Gypsy*, 150  
 Burton, Mr., agent, 204  
 Bush, Colonel, Docks Committee mem-  
     ber, xxi(n), 166  
 Bush, John, solicitor, 203  
 Bush Messrs., warehouse of, 111  
 butchers, 167  
 butter, 113, 158-9  
 bye laws, relating to explosives, 128, 132;  
     to petroleum, 101-2, 156, 181-2;  
     to sheds and quays, 128, 133, 140  
  
 Canada, xxiv, 108, 141, 152, 161, 202  
 Cannage and plankage rates, 180  
 canned goods, 159, 190  
 Canning, Thomas, Docks Committee  
     member, xxxi(n)  
 Canon's Marsh, 111  
 Cardiff, xiv, xv, 44, 136, 201, 204  
 Cardwell, Edward, President of the  
     Board of Trade, 24-5  
 carpenters, xxxv  
 Case, Edward, pilot, 137  
 Castle, Michael, Docks Committee mem-  
     ber, 63, 67  
 Castle and Co., 68  
 cattle dealers, 167  
 Cave, Baillie and Co., bankers, 134  
 central railway station, proposals for, 47,  
     53, 59  
 Chamber of Commerce, x, xxx, 22, 28,  
     32, 47, 63-5, 135-6  
 Chancery, court of, 33  
 Chapman, David, 8, 10  
 charter parties, 134  
 cheese, xix, 113, 158-9  
 chemical products, xvi  
 Cherbourg, xxvii  
 Chief Superintendent of Police, 103  
 cholera, 9  
 Chepstow, 76  
 Church and Phillips, contractors, 119-20  
 City Analyst, 125-6  
 City Council, aldermen, ix-x; cattle  
     plague committee, 136; as Conser-  
     vator, 170; councillors, ix-x; cru-  
     cial votes in, xi(n); finance com-  
     mittee of, 41, 164-5; fire brigade  
     of, 139; lands of, 169, 175; law  
     officers of, 24, 26, 55, 58; as Local  
     Board of Health, 56-7, minutes  
     of, 180; parliamentary bills com-  
     mittee of, 60, 69, 97, 195; power to  
     initiate legislation, 64; and railway  
     bills, 69-70; resolutions of, 20, 41-  
     2, 54-5, 110; treasurer of, 116, 155  
*See also* Anchorage and moorage  
     fees; Board of Health; Borough  
     Fund; Borough 4d rate; Collector;  
     Corporation bonds; Corporation  
     debenture stock; Cranage dues,  
     Harbour rate; Mayor; Mayor's  
     dues; Portishead Dock Co.; Sanit-  
     ary Authority; Streets Improve-  
     ment Committee; Surveyor; Town  
     Clerk; Town dues; Watch Com-  
     mittee; Wharfage rates  
 clerks, 130, 134-5, 155  
 Clift House creek, 156  
 Clifton, 47  
 Clifton Down, 100  
 Clyde, 50  
 coal, ix, xv, xvi, 43, 49, 158  
 coast guard cruisers, 98  
 cocoa, ix, xvii-xviii  
 coffee, ix, xvii-xviii  
 coffer dams, 83, 85-6, 88, 99, 109, 122  
 Collector (of Town dues), 124, 130;  
     clerks to, 56(n)  
 Conservatives, x  
 Consols, 81, 84-5  
 Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act  
     (1878), 154

- Cook's Folly, 74  
 Cork, 43, 156; Steam Navigation Co., 43, 50  
 Corn Measurer, xxxi  
 Coroner, 93, 101; deputy, 72  
 Coronation road, 48  
 Corporation, bonds, xxxviii, 48, 61, 66, 75, 81, 84, 91-2, 99, 105-6, 109, 118, 132, 181-2, 199; debenture stock, 182, 191, 194, 199, 201, 207  
 Corporation of the Poor, 141, 147, 195  
 cotton, ix, xv-xvi; seed, 190  
 Counterslip sugar refinery, 152  
 Cowes, xii  
 Craddy, James, pilot, 137  
 Crane dues, xxxi, xxxiv(n), xxxv, 34, 45, 53, 112  
 Crane Master, 82-3 *see also* Bawn, James  
 cranes, 34, 91, 101, 125, 127, 132, 155, 164-5, 181; *see also* Fairbairn steam crane  
 crimping, 123  
 Cuba, 108  
 Cubitt, Sir William, engineer, 41(n)  
 Cumberland Basin, xi, 90, 126; cattle pens at, 131; cattle slip at, 40; entrance to, 80; entrance sills, 51, 158, 164, 188; junction lock bridges, 40; landing stage at, 37; life hooks at, 94; new works proposed at, 49; new entrance lock, xi, 62, 71-2, 78, 81, 86, 88, 92, 99, 106, 109, 118, 121; repairs to 79-80; new junction lock, xi, 71, 75, 78, 81, 85-92, 99, 106, 109, 118, 122, 164-5; north lock, 21, 22, 58, 60, 61, 66; road at, 27; sheds at, 156, 167, 169, 176  
 Curnick, Mr., senior assistant clerk, 135  
 currants, xviii, xx(n)  
 Customs and Excise, Commissioners of, 59, 143; customs duty paid at Bristol, xx; establishment at Bristol, xx(n); Custom House, 91; records of, xxx  
 Dalrymple, H., director Avonmouth Dock Co., 63, 173  
 Daniel, J.F.R., secretary, Bristol and Portishead Railway Co, 175, 197  
 Davies, G., secretary Bristol General Steam Navigation Co., 138, 204  
 Day, Thomas, purveyor, 140  
 deals, 159, 176, 190, 202  
 Dean and Chapter(Bristol), 67  
 Dean's Marsh, 205  
 Denham, Sir Henry, Rear Admiral, 77(n)  
 Denny Island, 130  
 Deptford, foreign cattle market at, 141  
 Derham, James, Docks Committee member, 166  
 Dixon, J., general manager, Avonmouth Dock Co., 193, 197  
 Docks Committee  
   chairman, xxvi, 2, 11, 20, 28, 34, 38, 63, 161-2, 164, 186, 192-3, 197-9, 203-4  
   clerks to, 66, 89  
   deputy(vice) chairman, 2, 34, 63, 193, 204-5  
   engineer *see also* Blackwell, Sir Thomas; Girdlestone, J.W; Green, Joseph Dand; Howard, Thomas; Superintendent of Works  
     advice on salvage of S.S. *Gypsy*, 150  
     assistant engineer appointed, 142  
     Blackwell, Sir Thomas, appointed, 18, reply to instructions to reduce expenditure, 21, his proposals for his future, 28  
     clerk to, 18  
     duties of, xxxv, 18, 28  
     to employ steamer to prevent Float freezing, 155  
     employees of, xxxv  
     expenses, 106  
     foreman of, 18, 28  
     foresees competition with Avonmouth, 62  
     Howard, Thomas, appointed, 28(n)  
     instructions to reduce expenditure, 20-1  
     records of, xxix  
     reports of, accidental drowning, 117; cranes, 101, 127, 154; damage to junction lock, 133; discharge of sewers into Float, 132-3; electric light, 157; further river improvement, 178-9, 205; long service labourers, 200; new bridge over Brunel's lock, 121; parliamentary bills affecting docks, 94; Railway wharf Depot, 100-1; repitching quays, 135; sheds at Cumberland Basin, 156; sites for landing foreign animals, 138, 140-1; state of works, 91, 132-3; works of Avon-

- mouth Co. affecting mouth of Avon, 92
- to report on, cost and advisability of Docks Committee doing towage, 135; facilities for petroleum trade, 141; feasibility of ladders on Cumberland Basin walls, 73, landing facilities at mouth of Avon, 38; Prince Street Bridge, 128, 145, 155; should Docks Committee own its own barges, 125
- salary of, 18
- finances of, overall examination of, xxxii-xxxix *see also* expenditure interest, receipts
- financial procedure, 345-5
- meetings of, 2
- membership of, ix(n) -x, 2
- minutes of, xxix-xxx, xxxv
- office of, 89, 203
- pamphlet published by, 166
- quorum of, 2
- records of, xxix-xxx
- reports to city council, *passim*
- secretary *see also* Girdlestone, Francis; Hinton, Edward
- as Collector of city council's rates and dues, 56, 124, 130
- death of, 124
- election of, 124-5
- evidence to Royal Commission on tonnage measurement, xxxv, 175 and financial procedure, 134-5
- informs agents of terms for use of Cumberland Basin sheds, 156
- to investigate traffic management at other ports, 128
- pays compensation to victims of salvage of S.S. *Gypsy*, 150
- to publish pamphlet, 166
- records of, xxix
- reports on, describing port for Admiralty, 11-12; loss of revenue by diversion of trade to Avonmouth, 140, Prince Street tolls, 93; rebate of dues on grain, 169; removal of Messrs. Hill's ships from city docks to Avonmouth, 204; W. Smith's statement, 161-2, 165; tenders for works under 1865 Act, 71; tramways, 169-170, 184-5(n), 197
- salary of, 124, 184
- sub-committees, on bye laws, 3; on finance, xxix, 3, 28-9, 39, 103-8, 147, 155, 167, 200-1, 203; on harbour and works; on increased wharfage, 110-114; on quays and sheds, 129, 139, 140, 141
- statistical books, xxiv
- votes in 90, 97, 151, 160, 166, 170-2, 174, 178, 186, 191
- Dock dues
- application for reductions of, 151-2
- competition over with Avonmouth and Portishead *see* Avonmouth Dock Co. and Portishead Dock Co.
- deficiency in Collector's accounts, 34, 36
- dues on coastal shipping, 29, 31, 44
- dues on foreign produce brought coastwise, 56, 58, 60, 145, 181
- equalization of dues at city docks, Avonmouth and Portishead, 68, 95
- income from dues on tonnage and goods, decrease of, 18, 57, 60, 127, 176, 189, 202; increase of, 24, 28-9, 33, 40, 70, 74, 81, 85, 91, 99, 108, 118, 122, 131; average 1870-1872, 105
- proposals for abolition of 4d and harbour rate and Town dues etc, 41-2, 44-5, 53, 64-5, 112-115
- reduction of dues, effect of xii, 13-4, 22, 46-7, 57; as object of Home Improvements, xi, as recipe for recovery, vii, ix(n)
- table of annual produce of dues on tonnage and goods, xxxii
- dockisation, xxi-xxii, 36, 41-2, 163, 184
- Dock Master, 16, 167, 201, 203-4; deputy, 103; duties of, 7; office of, 27, 204, reports of, 10
- dockmen, 124
- dock owners, conference of, 175
- Docks and Harbour Trust(Commission), proposals for, xxvii, 194-5
- Dogett, E.G., clerk to the Corporation of the Poor, 147
- Dolman, Samuël, purveyor
- Downs Committee, 100
- Drawbridge, the, 59, 63, 66, 76, 153
- dredger, 71, 108, 121, 126
- 'dredges', xxxv
- dredging engine, 89
- Drew, John, Haven Master, 76, 82,

- 120(n) *see also* Haven Master
- Dublin, xiii
- Dunball Island, 38, 40, 90
- Dunlop, Matthew; Docks Committee member, 157, 166
- Durdham Down, 75; quarries, 81, 85, 100
- Durham University, 155
- Dymond, engineer, 100
- East mud dock, 108
- Ecclesiastical Commissioners, 71
- Edwards, Sir George, Docks Committee member, 171-4, 191
- Edwards, John, agent, 31
- Egelstaff, Thomas, contractor, 20
- electric light, 157, 160(n), 205
- emigration, 9-10, 32, 54, 60
- Encroachment Act (1837), 181
- English Grounds, 117
- engineers, xxxv
- Evans, George, agent, 31
- Exeter, 29
- Exchequer Bill Loan Commissioners, 3-4
- expenditure
- annual statements of ordinary and extraordinary expenditure in Docks Committee reports, 14-16, 19, 22, 24, 27, 30, 32-3, 37, 40, 45, 48, 57, 60-1, 65-6, 70-1, 74, 81, 84, 91, 99, 105, 108, 118, 121, 126, 131-2, 152, 175-6, 201
  - capital expenditure, financed out of revenue, xii, xxxv; paying off, conversion and redemption of, 48, 61, 74-5, 78, 121, 191; raising of capital, 3-9, 12-15, 19-20, 40, 54-5, 62, 65, 72, 79, 81-2, 91-2, 99, 105, 107, 109-110, 118, 122, 126, 132, 182; proposals for new capital expenditure, 104, 108; scale of, xxxviii-xxxix; total debt, old and new, 105-6; under 1865 Act, to 1869, 86-7, to completion, 106 extraordinary expenditure, financing of, xxxiv; items of, xxxviii; nature of, xxxiv
  - ordinary expenditure, financing of, xxxiv; items of, xxxv; nature of, xxxiv
  - table of totals of annual expenditure, xxxvi-xxxviii
  - trends of, xxxvii
- Explosive Substances Act (1875), 128, 132 *see also* bye laws
- Fairbairn steam crane, 128, 133, 154
- Feeder, Canal, viii, xxxi, 84, 91-3, 103, 108-9, 131, 197; Cut, 98; dam, 118, 121, 126-7, 132; farm, 94; lock, 103; rate, 105; walls, 48, 57, 95, 108, 118
- ferries, 82 *see also* Rownham
- Finch, Edward and Co., contractors, 76
- Finch and Heath, contractors, 76
- Finzel's sugar refinery, 165
- firearms, export of, xvi
- Firefly Rock, 76, 162
- Fixed Property party, x(n), xi(n), 42(n), 45, 53
- Flat Holmes, 22-3
- Flatness Rocks, 162
- Floating Harbour(the Float), vii(n), viii, 11-12, 69, 101, 110-111; access to, 49, 67; cost of improvement, 104, 108; freezing of, 155; lack of water in, 122, maintenance of, 21, 24, 31; smell of, 76
- flour, 113, 158-9, 177, 190, 201
- Foote, Admiral, Dock Superintendent, Newport(Mon), 128
- Ford James, Docks Committee member, x, xx(n), 32, 34, 63, 66, 77, 142-4, 148, 197
- foreign animals(cattle), import of, xi, xviii, 138, 140-1, 142, 151-2, 154-5, 166-8, 176, 182, 202
- foremen, 149
- Fon and Bailey, timber merchants, 126
- Forrow, Alexander, secretary, Associated Docks, London, 125
- Fountain and Boyd, contractors, 168
- Fox, Francis, oil and colour merchant and Docks Committee member, 94(n), 96, 166, 172, 180, 205
- France, 74
- Free Port Association, vii(n)
- Frome, river, vii-viii
- fruit, imports, ix, xvii, 83, 143, 176, 205
- Fry, Lewis, Docks Committee member, xxi(n), 142
- Fudge, Richard, director Portishead Dock Co., 142
- galvanizing works, 126
- Gardner, Henry, Docks Committee member, 171, 193
- gas, 89-90, 111, 160
- General Shipowners Society, 136

- Gerrish and Sainsbury, wharfingers, 92-3, 109
- Gibbs, Easton, contractors, 71-2
- Gibbs, James, Docks Committee member, 2, 3(n)
- Girdlestone, Francis, Secretary to Docks Committee, ix, xi-xii, xxi(n)-xxii, xxv-xxvi, xxx, xxxv-xxxviii, 125, 130, 147, 184, 191 *see also* Docks Committee, Secretary
- Girdlestone, John Ward, Docks Engineer, 142(n), 150, 199 *see also* Docks Committee, Engineer
- Glasgow, 23, 59, 86, 128, 158, 162, 204 glass, xvii-xviii
- Gloucester, ix(n), 30; port of, 23, 136 *see also* Sharpness
- Gloucester and Berkeley Canal Co., 22
- Glover, J., statistician, xiv
- Glover, L.W., company secretary, 44
- Goldeny, William, Docks Committee member, 1, 2, 3(n)
- Goodland, Thomas, dockman, 200
- Goole, 128
- Grace, Alexander, treasurer Bristol Cocoa Missions, 119
- Grace, Messrs., 89
- grain, imports  
     Bristol's role in Black Sea trade, xxii-iii(n); in U.K. trade, xx  
     charges on, proposed, 113-4, rebated, 168, 171, 178-9, reimposed, 198, 201  
     comparison of charges in city docks and Avonmouth, 172 diversion to Avonmouth, xxi, 134, 140, 176-7  
     landing and storage of, 131, 145, 151, 153, 205  
     national need for, xvii  
     quantities of at Bristol, xviii  
     sources of, xxii(n)
- granaries, 140, 182-3, 204
- Granby Hill, 88
- graving docks, 95, 108, 203, 206
- Great Western Hotel, 54(n)
- Great Western Railway Co., xxii, 47, 69-70, 81, 83, 133, 135, 138, 148, 154, 156, 167, 203; parliamentary bill, 95
- Great Western shipyard, 111
- Great Western Steamship Co., viii, xxi(n), 162, 165
- Green, Joseph Dand, Superintendent of Works, 4(n) 6, 16-7 *see also* Superintendent of Works
- Green, S. Captain, Harbour Master (Dock Master), 121, 149, 201, 203 *see also* Harbour Master
- Green Tidenham, Dock Master, 6-7(n) *see also* Dock Master
- Green's Dock, 186, 199, 204
- Greenock, 128, 186
- Grey, 3rd Earl, Colonial Secretary, 9-10(n)
- gridiron, 108, 206
- Grierson, Mr., general manager, GWR, 203
- Grove, the, 28, 48, 58, 91, 95, 119
- guano, imports, xviii, 70, 108, 176
- Guinea Street, pier head, 121, 126
- Guinness and Co., 138
- gunpowder, exports, xvi
- Hall, Mr., ships master, 120
- Hall, James, Captain, pilot, xxx ham, xviii, 113
- Hamburg, xxvii
- Handcock, Mr., tug master, 120
- Hanham, 166
- Harbour Commission or Trust, proposal of, xxvii
- Harbour Master, 33, 102, 124-5, 166, 183(n); registers of, xxix
- Harbour rate on houses in the ancient city, xxxi, 41-2, 45, 105, 112
- Hardy, Captain R.N., 40
- Hare, Charles, Docks Committee member, 152, 154, 160, 166, 171-4
- Harrison, A.N., traffic manager, 129
- Harrison, Mr., hydraulic engineer, 72
- Hathway, William, director, Portishead Dock Co., 143
- Hatter's shop, Castle Street, 126
- Havana, 70
- Haven Master, 98, 117, 127, 135-6, 144, 146, 149, 161-2, 164, 173; duties of, 7; reports of, xxix
- Hawkshaw, John, engineer, 41(n), 49
- Haward, James, pilot, 137
- Haycroft and Pethick, merchants, 29
- Heaven, John, clerk to Local Board of Health, 76, 93, 97, 114
- Hellicar, John, Docks Committee member, 96
- hemp, xviii, 27
- Hennet, Spinks and Else, contractors, 58
- Herapath, William, Councillor, 41(n)

- Hibbard, Henry, contractor, 90  
 hides, xviii, 29–30, 36, 176, 202  
 Hill, Charles and Sons, shipowners and shipbuilders, 33, 111, 157, 160(n), 168, 170, 173–4, 204–5  
 Hinton, Edward, Secretary to Docks Committee, 6, 124 *see also* Docks Committee, Secretary  
 Holland, 74  
 Holmes, the, 44, 130, 146, 181, 183  
 Home Improvements, xi(n), xx, xxii, xxxv, 61, 158, 161, 165; cost of, xxi–xxvi, xxxviii, 77–9, 160, 163  
 Hook, the, 117  
 Hooper, John, publican, 38–9  
 Horseshoe, bend, xxviii, 63, 121, 158; point, 49, 51–2, 54, 58  
 Hosking, Mr., engineer's foreman, 28  
 Hotwell, house, 81; point, 89, 100  
 Howard, Thomas Docks Engineer(1855–1882)  
   advises on storage of petroleum, 94, 96–7  
   agreement with Merchant Venturers on Merchants Dock, 119–120  
   appointed to carry out works under 1865 Act, 67  
   to get estimates for steam tug fire engine, 131, 139, 144  
   to prepare plans for dam below Totterdown lock, 109  
   to produce sketches for replacing the Drawbridge, 63, 76  
   remuneration of, 41, 67, 119, 147, 199  
   reports on, dockisation, xxvi(n), 36(n); effect of Port Extension Railway's project, 60; Further Report(1859), 38; increased wharfage, 110–112; progress of works under 1865 Act, 85, 92, 99–100, 109–110, 118–119, 122; revised plan for improving entrance to harbour, 58, 62; special report on river and harbour (1862), 49–53  
   to report on, improving river at Round Point, 34  
   resignation of, 198  
   suggests competition with Avonmouth will arise, 61, 95  
 Hughes, Richard, ship's master, 17  
 Hull, xiv–xv, xxiv(n) 29, 100, 128, 143, 162  
 Hungroad, 51–2  
 Hunt, Thomas, steam tug engineer, 72  
 Hunt, William, pilot, 137  
 Huru, John, purveyor, 140  
 hydraulic machinery, 86, 92, 99–100, 122, 140  
 Indian corn, 113  
 interest, rates on borrowed capital, xxxviii, 9, 15, 19, 40, 74, 78, 81, 84, 92, 99, 106–7, 109, 118, 132, 182–3(n), 191, 199; saving of, 40, 46, 48, 61  
 Ireland, vessels from, 44, 48, 153, 165, 183(n)  
 iron, ix, xvi; swivel bridge, 76  
 Jarman, Francis, Docks Committee member, 1, 2, 3(n)  
 Jennings, R., Harbour Master, Bathurst Basin, 174  
 Jessop, Josias, engineer, 12  
 Jessop, William, engineer, 12  
 John, steam barge, 26, 27(n)  
 Johnson, Mr., chief clerk, Southampton Dock Co., 125  
 Jones and Nash, Messrs., 140  
 Jones, John, Docks Committee member, 152, 166, 174  
 Jose, Thomas, Docks Committee member, 77  
 Kedpath, W.J., Collector of Customs, 91  
 Kindersley, Vice-Chancellor, 33  
 King, Richard Poole, Docks Committee member, 1, 2, 3, (n), 11, 20–1, 32, 38, 42(n)  
 King, R. and N., Messrs., merchants, 190  
 Kingroad, viii, 23, 76, 96, 102, 117, 130, 135–7, 170, 184; pier, 34  
 Kings Beam House, xxx  
 Kinton, John, 150  
 labour, Docks Committee to undertake, 180, 185, 191, 195  
 labourers, xxxv, 149, 200, 203; provident fund proposed for, 200  
 Lancashire, xv  
 landing stage, at Bathurst Basin, 22; costs of, 106; at Cumberland Basin, 37; at mouth of Avon, 38; for steamers, 95, 109  
 Lane, William, Docks Committee member, 193, 198  
 lard, 190

- Law, Charles, Docks Committee member, 166, 172-4
- Law, C.H., secretary, Bristol Timber Importers Association, 141
- lawyers, x
- Le Havre, xxvii
- Leeds, 192(n)
- Leigh Woods Co., 71
- Leith, xxxix, 128
- lemons, xviii
- Lewin, Frederick, deputy Quay Warden, 119(n)
- Liberals, x
- lightering, 163
- lightermen, xxxv
- linen, xvi
- liners, 196-8, 204
- linseed, 190
- Liverpool, ix, xii-xv, xxii, xxiv(n), xxvii, xxviii, 23, 30-1, 59, 68, 86, 111, 128, 143, 158, , 162, 192(n)
- Local Marine Board, 123(n)
- Locks *see also* Cumberland Basin  
gates of, 86, 91-2  
length of, 80
- lockmen, 21, 105
- London, xii-xv, xxiv(n), 29-31, 49, 68, 86, 136, 143, 205
- Lovellers, 99
- Loxton, Samuel, lessee of tolls, 10
- Lucas, Edward, Docks Committee member, 166
- Lundy Island, 22, 98, 170, 183
- machinery, xvi
- McCulloch, J.R., economist, 11(n)
- McLean, Frank, director Portishead Dock Co., 142
- McNab, James, traffic manager, 129 *see also* traffic manager
- maize, xxi, xxii
- Manchester, xxii, 192(n)
- manufacturers, x
- Mardyke wharf, xi, 33, 37, 81, 84, 110
- Marmont, James, surveyor, 75
- Marsh Bridge, 48, 57, 103, 119
- Maudslay, H.H. and Co., contractors, 89
- Mayor, xxxv(n), 32, 43, 181, 183-4, 192, 196-7; role in purchase of Severn-side docks, 206-7
- Mayor's dues, xxxi, xxxiv-v, 42-3, 45, 53, 56, 115-6, 129, 160
- merchants, 155; African, x; American, x
- Merchant Shipping Act (1876), 184
- Merchant Venturers, x, xxxi, 20, 24, 28, 30, 32, 39, 46, 71, 75, 119-20, 140-1, 168; and graving dock, 86-7; and Merchants Dock, 75, 120, 168; and wharfage rates and lease, 5(n), 35-7, 39, 41-2, 45-6
- Merryweather fire engine, 139, 144
- Midland Railway Co., 47, 95, 156, 161, 163; parliamentary bill, 84, 94-5
- Miles family, x(n); J.H., 4; John William Docks Committee member, 2, 3, (n), 10; Phillip William, xxi(n), 10; William, 10; Sir William, 71; William Henry, Docks Committee member, 152, 166
- Miles, Harford, Battersby and Miles, bankers, 3
- Milford Haven, 43-4
- millers, 98
- Moldavia, xxiii-xxv
- Moore, A., secretary to the joint committee of the Bristol Harbour Railway Co., 82, 100
- Morgans Pill, 102, 155
- Morte Stone, 128, 136
- Moxley, Mr., agent for tug owners, 137
- mud boats, 46
- Naish, William, Docks Committee member, 1, 2, 3(n), 32
- naptha, 155, 176-7, 185
- Nash, Charles, Docks Committee member, xx(n), 32, 96, 97, 144, 154, 171, 173, 197
- Narrow Quay, 66, 153
- Neale, Henry, contractor, 20
- Nelson Point, 76, 120
- Netham, 96-7, 118; dam, 21-2; road and culvert, 108; works at, 126
- Newcastle upon Tyne, xiv-v
- New Cut, xxxv, 109
- Newman, Henry, Docks Committee employee, 117
- Newport(Mon), xii, 44, 128, 136, 201, 204
- newspaper reporters, 130-1
- New York, 159
- North Channel, 52, 89-90 *see also* Avon, river, entrance to, and Swash
- North Somerset Railway Co., 95
- Nottingham, 192(n)
- oats, 113
- oils, 176, 205

- oil cake, 152, 177, 190  
oil seed, xvi-xviii  
oranges, xviii  
ores, 202  
Osborne, Robert, solicitor to Bristol Dock Co., 1, 2(n), 3, 8, 12-3, 24, 111  
Overend and Gurney, bankers, 7(n), 8
- Page, Thomas, engineer, 41(n)  
Palmer, Henry, xxi(n)  
palm oil, ix, xvii, xviii, 36, 190  
parliamentary expenses, 60, 61, 66, 70  
parliamentary papers, xxx  
Parry, John, director Portishead Dock Co., 143  
Parsons, E., Captain R.N. Haven Master, xxx, 149-50 *see also* Haven Master  
Paving Commissioners, 15  
Payne, John, tug owner, 137-8 *see also* towage and tugs  
peas, 113  
Peel, C.L. official of Veterinary Department of the Privy Council, 142  
Penzance, 205  
Percy, G.W., junior clerk 134-5 *see also* clerks  
Pethick, Thomas, Docks Committee member, 63  
Pethick, William, Docks Committee member, 143, 151-2, 166, 193, 198  
Petroleum, 91, 96-7; Acts relating to, 91, 101, 102, 156; import of xvii-xviii, 152, 155, 176-7, 185, 190, 205; storage of, 94  
Pheasant Quarry Point, 49, 52, 62, 89  
Phippen, Robert, Docks Committee member, 1, 2, 3, (n)  
pigs, 158-9, 168  
Pike, J.T., public accountant, 36, 134(n)  
Pill, 179(n)  
pilotage, 70, 77, 123, 205; appointment of new pilots, 137; Avonmouth Dock Co. seeks pilotage powers, 169-70; withdraws, 173; complaints about pilots, 98, 117; compulsory pilotage west of Holmes challenged defended and abandoned, 22-5, 183; incapacity of Senior Pilot, 127-8, pilots complaint against Whitwell and Co., 179; pilots and gratuities, 135-6; licensing of, 145-6; warned by Docks Committee 82; pilotage powers transferred to Docks Committee, 46(n); pilot suspended, 120-1
- Plotness, 76  
Plymouth, 10, 29, 54  
police, 112 *see also* water police  
Poole, James Jn., Docks Committee member, 1, 2, 3, (n) 38  
pork, 113, 159  
Portishead, floating pier, 53; Pill, 95; roads, 76  
Portishead Dock Co.,  
    Acts of parliament  
    Portishead Pier Act (1866), 95  
    Bristol and Portishead Pier and Railway (Portishead Docks) Act (1871) 34 & 35 Vict c 142, 96(n), 110, 116, 132, 157, 181, 188
- bills  
    Bristol and Portishead Pier and Railway (Portishead Docks bill) (1871), 95-7  
    Bristol and Portishead Pier and Railway Portishead Dock bill (1880), 169  
city council and, power to subscribe to, xxi(n), 95-6; borrowing to do so, 110, 116, 118, 122, 126, 132; city council directors of, 143, 157, 180, 192-3  
    competition with city docks, xxi, 175, 178  
    construction difficulties, 143  
    cost of dock, xxv  
    drawbacks of Portishead, 162-3  
    employment of labour at, xxxv  
    extension of time, xxv, 142  
    issue of shares, 157, 169  
    negotiations with Docks Committee, 180, 184, 186, 188-195  
    promoters of, xx(n)  
    purchase of by city council, xxvi, 206-7  
    tonnage entering, xxvi
- Portishead Pier and Railway, 53, 54(n), 63, 68, 163, 175  
potatoes, xix, 113  
Powell, William, Docks Committee member, 166  
Prideaux, Revd., 117  
Princes Shed, 194  
Prince Street, 82, 84, 203  
Prince Street Bridge, electric light at, 160, engineer to report on, 129, ending of tolls proposed, 93,



- agreed, 114, terms negotiated, 133-4, 138-140; new bridge proposed, 127, 139-140, 145, 148, progress of, 153, 155, tender for, 147, completed, xi; quay walls above and below, 92, 100; quay extension below, 111, 115, 132
- Prince of Wales, H.R.H., 152(n)
- Pritchard, James, purveyor, 140
- Privy Council, Lords of, 152, 166-7, 202; Veterinary Department of, 136, 140-1, 142, 155
- Provisional Order, 169
- provisions, xviii-xix, 152, 158, 161, 176-7
- Public Record Office, xxx
- purveyors, 140
- Pyramid Electric Co., 160
- quarries, 75; Black Rock, 71, 89; Merchants, 71, 91; *see also* Durdham Down
- quays, 95, 131, 140-1, 169; repitching of, 128, 133, 153; walls, 133, 153
- Quay Warden, 101; deputy, 119; duties of, 7; fees of, xxxi, xxxiv-v, 42-3, 45, 53, 56, 112, 129; salary of, 8
- Queen Square, 47, 89, 203
- railroad iron, xvi
- railways
- Acts of Parliament
    - Bristol Harbour Railway(1866) 29 & 30 Vict.c148, 70(n)
    - Bristol Harbour Railway(1873)
    - Bristol Harbour Railway(1877)
  - Bills
    - Bristol Central Station and Railway, 59
    - Bristol Harbour Junction Railway and Wharf Depot
    - Bristol and North Somerset Railway Extension
    - Bristol Port Extension Railway
    - Bristol and Portishead Pier and Railway
  - Companies
    - Bristol and Exeter, 47, 69-70(n) 81, 83
    - Bristol and North Somerset, 59-60(n), 69, 84
    - Bristol Port Extension, 69
    - Bristol Port Railway and Pier, 63, 68
  - Connections with docks, 22, 31, 47
  - Railway Wharf Depot, xi, 68-9, 81, 83, -5, 91-2, 100, 105, 110-111, 114, 116, 118; extension of, 119, 122, 126-7, 132, 135, 182
- raisins, xviii
- Recorder, 147
- receipts
- annual statements of, in Docks Committee reports, 12-16, 19, 22, 24, 27, 30-3, 37, 40, 45, 48, 57, 60, 66, 129, 131, 148, 152, 175, 201
  - annual statements of balances of receipts and expenditure in Docks Committee reports, 13-16, 18-19, 29, 31, 33, 37, 40, 45-48, 57, 61-2, 66-7, 71, 74, 78-9, 81, 91, 104, 107, 118, 122, 126, 132, 147, 152, 167, 175-6, 201
  - calculation of balances, xxxv-xxxviii
  - net balances of Town Dues etc., xxiv, 116
  - miscellaneous receipts, xxxiii-iv
  - surplus revenues, 44, 55, 65, 72, 78-9, 81, 84, 99, 104, 107, 116
  - table of receipts from all sources, xxxii-iii
  - table of balances according to different assumptions, xxxvi-xxxviii
- Redcliff, 70
- regatta, 98
- Rendel, Mr. engineer, 35(n)
- Rennie and Co., 9(n), 22
- Removal of Wrecks Act (1887), 149
- resin, 176
- rice, 113
- riggers, 149
- roads, 56-7, 82
- Roberts, Mr., of the Nautical Almanac Office, 188
- Roberts, Letitia, 150
- Robinson Richard, Docks Committee member, x, 1, 2, 3, (n), 32, 97
- Roland, Edward, pilot, 137
- rosin, 202
- Round Point, removal of, 20, 34, 38, 71, 75, 81, 89; rock shoal at, 179, 183(n), 203
- Rowe, Richard, telegraphist, 90
- Rowe, Richard, agent, 23, 31
- Rowles, Joeph, pilot, 117
- Rownham, 48, 51, 79, 95; ferry at, 49, 52, 54, 70, 71
- Royal Commission on tonnage measurement, 184, 197
- Royal Naval Volunteers, 40

- rum, xvii  
 Russia, xxiii-iv; war with, xiv, 27, 30  
 rye, 113
- St Augustine's Butts, 95, 108, 111  
 St. Augustine's Parade, 76  
 St George Steam Packet Co., 43  
 St George(Glouc), 91  
 St Johns (Newfoundland), 108  
 St Phillips (Bristol), 94  
 Sanders, George, Docks Committee member, 1, 2, 3, (n)  
 Sanitary Authority, 122, 125, 138-140, 186  
 Savaery and Co., 34  
 Scotland, 77  
 Seamen and Boatmens Mission, 186  
 seeds, 202  
 Serle, Mr., mason's labourer, 101  
 Severn, river, viii, xxvi-xxvii, 95, 130; tunnel, 158, 163  
 sewage, disposal of, xxvi, 163  
 sewers, 15, 125  
 Sharpness, 152, 201  
 Shaw, J.G., governor of the Corporation of the Poor, 9, 10(n), 41(n)  
 sheds, additional recommended, 153-5; bonded, 66; bye laws for, 128, 132, 181; erection postponed, 20; and Merchant Venturers wharfage lease, 35, 39, 42, 46; need for, 19, 28, 29-30, 59, 65, 85-6, 193-4, 204; progress and completion of, 48, 58, 67, 71, 127, 132, 156, 167, 199, 201, 203; removal of goods from, 114; gas to, 89; total capacity, xi; traffic manager for, 128-9; use of, 82-3  
 sheep, 158-9, 168  
*Shipping Gazette*, 134  
 ships, iron, viii; owners of, x; sailing, viii, xxiv-v  
   *Agnes*, 155  
   *Ansdel*, 91  
   *Aragon*, 151  
   *Chancellor*, 162  
   *Clio*, 133  
   *Cornwall*, 151  
   *Demerara*, 121(n)  
   *Effingham*, 17  
   *Eliza*, 155  
   *Great Britain*, viii(n)  
   *Great Eastern*, 164  
   *Gypsy*, 121(n), 149-151, 154-5, 157, 167, 176  
   *Hector*, 162  
   *Juno*, 94  
   *Kronprinz*, 121-2  
   *Leviathan*, i(n)  
   *Monsoon*, 94  
   *Phoenix*, 91  
   *Preussischer Adler*, 43, 49, 50  
   *Resistance*, 98  
   *Sabrina*, 43, 49, 50  
   *Trincmalee*, 40  
 ship bulding yards, 111 *see also* Hill, Charles  
 shipwrights, 149  
 Shirehampton, 90, 120(n)  
 Skew Bridge, 197  
 Smith, William(Garibaldi) Docks Committee member, xxi, 166, 172-4; proposal for purchasing Avonmouth Dock, 156-165  
 Smith, William and Co., merchants, 85, 86(n)  
 Smyth, family, x(n); Sir Greville, xxi(n)  
 South America, 70  
 Southampton, xiv, xxvii, 54  
 South Wales, ix, xv, xxii, 158, 163, 165, 204 *see also* Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and Welsh ports  
 spelter, 202  
 spirits, ix, xviii, xix  
 Stapleton, 15  
 steam drills, 122  
 steam fire engine, 131, 138  
 steamships, xxv, xxvii-vii, 23, 31, 38, 43, 48, 80, 82, 109, 166, 193; carrying coal, 93; coastal, xxv; in harbour, 114; Mediterraeen, 85-6; ocean going, xxi, xxvii, 62, 96, 156-9, 161-3, 175  
 Steddar, Joseph, Collector of Rates and dues, 6, 7, (n), 34, 36  
 stevedoring, 201  
 Stileman, Frank, engineer Portishead Dock Co., 142-3, 148  
 Stoate, Hosegood and Co., 131  
 Stock, Mr., agent, 204  
 stockbroker, x  
 Stoddard, Walter, City Analyst, 126  
 Stoke Bishop, 100  
 Stone Bridge, 59, 66, 101, 110  
 Stothart and Pitt, crane manufacturers, 101, 128, 205  
 Streets Improvement Committee, 133, 186

- Sturge, Mr., surveyor, 78
- sugar, trade and imports of, xix, 19, 31, 40, 60, 70, 74, 75(n), 80, 85, 108, 148, 153, 171, 177, 186, 190, 202; refined, xix, 74, 186; refiners, 171, 186 *see also* Finzel's sugar refinery
- Sunderland, xii, xiv
- surgeons, x
- Superintendent of Works, duties of, 3-4, 10; reports of, xxix, 15 *see also* Green, Joseph Dand
- Surveyor, reports of, 58-9, 76, 205
- Suspension Bridge, 70, 157; Co., 71; Point, 75, 89, 179, 183(n), 203
- Swansea, xi, xxxix, 201; parliamentary bills, 24-5, 175; Trust, 175
- Swash(channel, 52, 89, 92, 120-1, 130, *see also* Avon, river, entrance to, North Channel
- tallow, xix, 27
- Tanner, Samuel, chairman, Bristol Cocoa Missions, 119
- Taylor and Low Bros., timber merchants, 119
- Taylor, Thomas, Docks Committee member, xxi(n), 90, 154
- tea, xvii, xix
- Tea and Coffee House Point, 75, 89, 179, 183(n)
- Teast, Mr., 67
- Temple Meads, 47, 67, 69, 100, 115
- Terrell, Frederick, Docks Committee member, 143, 166
- Terrett, William, purveyor, 140
- Thayer, Thomas, pilot, 137
- Thomas, Christopher, Docks Committee member, xxi(n), 1, 3(n), 39, 66, 90, 154
- Thomas, George, Docks Committee member, x, 2, 3(n), 21
- Thomas, Herbert, manufacturer, 54(n)
- Thomas, Sidney, pilot, 137
- tide gauge, 188
- tide table, 188
- timber, imports of, xix, 13, 31, 48, 70, 74, 108, 141, 152, 176-7, 190; importers, x; yards, 111
- tobacco, ix, xvii, xix
- tolls, at Overfall Gate, 10, 15, 56; at Princes Street Gate, 10, 56-7, 69, 93, 97; at Totterdown Gate, 10, 15, 56; at Underfall Gate, 56
- Tomlinson, John, deputy Dock Master, 103, 119, 204
- tonnage entering Bristol, coastwise, xii-xiv, 108, 201; from foreign parts, xiii-xiv, 33, 36-7, 40, 45, 57, 60, 66, 70, 74, 85, 91, 99, 108, 118, 201; of steam vessels entering coastwise, 118; of steam vessels from foreign parts, 118, 122, 127; of sailing vessels from foreign parts, 122, 127; total entering Bristol, xii-xiii
- tonnage entering Bristol, Avonmouth and Portishead, 192
- tonnage measurement, xxx, 32, 175, 184-5
- tonnage, U.K. statistics, xiv
- Tothill, William, Docks Committee member, 1, 2, 3(n)
- Totterdown, 118, 121, 166; lock, 108, 109, 118, 127, 131, 133; new bridge, 122; new wharf and road, 27
- towage, 135-8, 145, 155, 159, 181-2, 189, 192
- Town Clerk, 41, 101, 135, 136, 141, 144, 147, 148, 167; and S.S. *Gypsy*, 150, 167; legal action against, 195; legal advice to Docks Committee, 145, 152, 171, 180; negotiation with Portishead Dock Co., 60, 173-4; reports on City Council proceedings, 125, 183, 194, 196
- Town Dues Act (1825), 181
- Town dues, xxxi, xxxiv-v, 42, 45, 53, 56, 64, 112, 115-6, 129, 160, 176, 180, 197
- Townsend, Charles, Docks Committee member, 166
- trade, coastal, 23; depression of 27, 30, 33, 57, 60, 129, 131, 149, 152, 165; export, xv-xvi, 44; with France, xvii, 153; import, xvii-xx, 16, 21-3, 27, 30-2, 108; with Ireland, 23, 141(n), 142; with N. America, xvii with Spain, xvii, 202; with West Africa, xvii; with West Indies, x, xvii
- traffic manager, 145, 162, 169, 203
- tramways, 47, 60, 69, 82, 84, 153, 167-9, 171
- Treasury, xx
- Tredwell, William, contractor, 71-2, 75, 80(n)83, 122
- Trevelyan, Sir Charles, 8

- Trevor, Cecil, assistant secretary, Board of Trade, 101, 130, 148
- Trinity House (Board), 76–7, 136
- Trull, William, purveyor, 140
- tugs, 72, 79, 82, 131, 135–8, 144, 155, 182, 183(n), 205; tugs, *Advance*, 120, *Bulldog*,
- Turkey, xxiii
- Tyne, Commissioners, xxxviii; river, 101
- typhoid fever, 74
- Underfall, 58, 126
- Underfall Point, 48, 51, 52, 57
- Underfall yard, 108, 111
- uniforms, for employees, 124
- United States (America), xxii, 27, 48, 57, 70, 99, 141, 152, 154, 157–9, 161, 168, 202
- Vauxhall ferry, 70
- Vessels remaining in harbour, nuisance of, 114, 145, 181, 183(n)
- Vining, John, Docks Committee member, 1, 2, 3(n)
- Visger, Harman, Docks Committee member, 1, 2, 3(n)
- Wait, William, Docks Committee member, 119, 152
- Walker, James, engineer, 35
- Wall, James, Docks Committee member, xxi(n), 154–5, 166, 174, 178
- Wallachia, xxiii–xxiv
- Wapping, 115; wharf depot at, 67, 69, 71, 78
- Ward, Mr., property owner, 203
- Ward, S.B., solicitor, 150
- Warren, William, Docks Committee member, 97
- Wasborough, H.S., coroner, 93, 101
- Watch Committee, 13(n) 102, 139, 144
- Water Bailiff, 82, 101, 103, 145, 152; duties of, 7; fees of, 42, 45, 53, 56, 112, 129; salary of, 7–8
- Waterford, 149, 156; Steamship Co. of, 167
- watermen, 91
- water police, 13(n), 102–3, 149
- Welsh Back, 28, 71, 82, 153, 201, 203, 205
- Welsh Ground, 127
- Welsh ports, 153
- Westbury road, 100
- Westminster Palace Hotel, 175
- West mud dock, 108
- Weston, J.D. Docks Committee member, xxi(n), xxvii
- Wetherman, A. agent for Messrs. Guinness and Co., 138
- wharfs, accommodation at, 110, 114–5; and Liverpool steamers, 111; private, 111; public, 66, 110 *see also* Merchant Venturers
- Wharfage Act (1807), 181
- wharfage rates (dues), xxxiv–v, 53, 56, 112, 114–6, 129, 133, 153–4, 160, 176, 180, 185, 197
- wheat, xxi, xxii, 113, 159
- Whitwill, Mark, Docks Committee member and shipowner, 17(n), 23, 114, 138, 152, 154, 173
- Whitwill and Co., 144, 151, 179
- wholesalers, x
- Wills, George Docks Committee member, x, 63, 154, 164–6, 172–4, 178, 199, 205
- Williams, Price, statistician, xiv
- Wilson, Edwin, 150
- Wilson, John, deputy Quay Warden, 119
- wine, ix, xvii, xix, 36, 48, 59, 83, 153, 177
- Woodward, George, director Portishead Dock Co., 142
- wool, xix
- woollen manufacturers, xvi
- Wort, George, ferryman, 70
- zinc, xvii, xix

